

AMERICA

A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

MAY 25, 1940

WHO'S WHO

HILAIRE BELLOC has, from time to time in these columns, been putting on a pin point a very concentrated thesis. At least, that is a way of trying to indicate what we found in his contribution. Another way would be to say that Mr. Belloc, taking a capacious view of history, strives to explain all history in a thousand words. . . . ELIZABETH JORDAN writes *Theatre* every week in our concluding pages. She has been our critic for eighteen consecutive years. She also writes fiction, and that most entertainingly. Her latest story, *First Port of Call*, rapidly ran through several editions. It is a "survival" fantasy. Though it may involve a theological dispute, it is capable of starting a moral regeneration in the soul. In regard to theology and religion, Miss Jordan is staunchly Catholic. . . . FARRELL SCHNERING was a Red leader in Wisconsin, as he intimates in his article. He edited a Communist periodical and took a prominent part in the inner circles of the Party. His revelations about the American Youth Congress confirm the public record. The Congress is not American and does not represent the Youth. . . . RAYMOND A. GRADY, who recently discoursed on food, turns with great facility to books and words. . . . JOHN LAFARGE, Associate Editor, meets a situation that is causing endless irritation. Is it not incredibly stupid for Protestants to worry about the union of the Catholic Church with the United States? We say it is. . . . JOHN P. DELANEY, Staff Writer, invokes his familiarity with Italians in order to interpret them as they now are—he insists—according to the newspapers of today, not as they might be next week.

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COMMENT

AMERICAN citizens are asking some very pointed questions as the result of the President's address to Congress, seeking emergency appropriations to make this country's defenses impregnable. Every citizen knows that eight billion dollars have been poured into our defense program for the past eight years. A great many people are asking how that enormous sum has been spent, in view of the reported deficiencies of our aircraft and, particularly, of our anti-aircraft defense. A mere two billion dollars have been already appropriated by Congress for this coming fiscal year, and if the President's further demand of \$1,182,000,000 meets the approval of the Legislature, another cold three billion dollars are ready to be poured into the same sink. No American citizen is going to object to his money being spent sanely and soundly for defense of his rights. But it is the duty of every American citizen to see to it that his money, which is going to cost him and his family untold hardship, is not frittered away in the untried schemes of political hacks. This is a time when we need the practical common sense of hard-boiled business men under the advice of technical experts of our army and navy. But above all, it is the duty of Congress to investigate why the President wants nearly one-sixth of the entire appropriation he is asking of Congress, namely \$200,000,000, for emergencies and special contracts over which he will have complete control.

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100,000 men were slain by the Nazis during their five day conquest of Holland, according to the Netherlands Foreign Minister, E. N. van Kleffens. That is, one out of every four men in the Dutch army died in action. The protest of the Dutch people was drowned by the roar of Nazi guns and planes. The freedom of Holland was crushed into the soil by Nazi heels. The Netherlands capitulated, lest the savage destruction go on. But the Dutch people have not surrendered, declares the Queen and the Foreign Minister. They remain at war with Germany. They have, of themselves, nothing left but hope and courage. They have, however, the friendship of all men who believe in justice, and the prayer of all who believe in God.

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SPAIN'S position on neutrality in the present European war has again become a matter of discussion in recent weeks. Probably, the main reason for the foreign correspondents' uncertainty is due in great part to the more immediate issue of Italy's possible entrance into the war on the side of Germany. It will be impossible, think these newspaper observers, for Spain to maintain her present neutral status, once Italy has decided to throw in her

lot with Hitler. This may be just a little wishful thinking on their part, since many of them have never forgiven Franco for winning the Civil War. But there are many indications that point to the probable course that the Franco Government will pursue, even in the event of Italy's participation on the side of the Nazis. This fact remains paramount in the Spanish mind. Russia was responsible, first and last, for instigating and prosecuting the war in Spain, and Spaniards are slow to forget. Whatever nation, then, allies itself with Russia, it forthwith becomes suspect, even though that nation were previously bound by closest ties to Spain. The Nazi-Soviet alliance reacted strikingly on German-Spanish relations. The invasion of Finland was treated by the Spanish press with scathing denunciation of Russian perfidy. So, too, has been the reaction to the German invasion of Holland and Belgium, with which nations Spain has long maintained a friendly relationship. But above all, we have reason to believe Franco when he asserted, some time back, that Spain was exhausted and weary of war, and that she would fight only to maintain her territorial integrity. Franco has stood by his past promises; we believe he will not falter now.

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SOME very interesting facts are revealed by a closer study of the statistics published in the Official Catholic Directory for 1940. One bit of information causes us to pause thoughtfully and take stock with ourselves. The General Summary of the Directory discloses, supposing that all the dioceses have submitted accurate information to the publishers, that there were 73,677 converts to the Catholic Faith for the year 1939. At first glance this number seems rather striking, and we are liable to sit back complacently and offer ourselves congratulations, with a hearty slap on the back. But when we further consider that there are 33,912 priests, secular and religious, in the country, the number of converts does not appear quite so impressive. Interpreted in percentages that means that each priest, on an average, was responsible for 2.17 converts during the year. It is notable that Camden with its ninety-seven priests leads the list of all dioceses with 467, or 4.81, converts per priest. The question of converts, of course, depends largely upon conditions, such as the amount of prejudices that must be overcome before any progress can be made. This may be largely responsible for the comparatively few converts in some dioceses and sections of the country. Still, the facts as revealed in the Directory should stimulate the clergy, and the laity as well—for this is the age of the lay apostolate—to greater efforts in bringing the Faith to millions of people who are hungering for religious truth.

THE RAPID turn of events in Europe has put to a severe test our own Government's foreign policy amid the rising waves of emotional hysteria. One Washington correspondent thinks it would be a good thing for the Government to forego, for the present, its preoccupation with economic problems to concentrate on a more vigorous war course. The same writer even reproves the President for not coming out more forthright and plainly, though this latter accusation appears completely off the mark, in that particular. Messrs. Frank Knox, Wendell Willkie and Senator Austin, all Republicans and with one or several political and other axes to grind, are cited as exemplars of national sagacity and wisdom. The truth, the sad truth is that we are far too preoccupied with external affairs at a time when our internal problems, social and economic, clamor for attention and solution. All true American citizens will welcome national unity and solidarity in the face of external dangers. The candidate for President who will mainly concentrate attention and study on these actual problems will receive a remarkable chorus of approval from the bulk of our people which will confound, if not surprise, the editors and publishers who speak for entrenched special interests, and think of money rather than of men.

THE listeners at the annual meeting of the American Council on Education in Washington, D. C., got something to ponder, if not approve, in the forceful words of the President of Fordham University. Father Gannon is not quite alone, though almost so, in healthful criticism of the distorted aims of a liberal education in our catch-as-catch-can mechanized education. Two great institutions, education and the press, have been termed "formers" and "reflectors" of the public life and conscience. A New York daily makes a practice and boasts of its technique of solving fundamental human problems by pick-up answers from the street corner. We have heard *ad nauseam* the obligation of education to adjust itself to the changing conditions of life. "Too many have gone completely modern and are now cold-blooded emporia selling chunks of dead information at \$10 a point." The liberal-arts college and curricula have been squeezed out by pre-medical, pre-law, etc., courses, all promising information at the least sacrifice and promising even "to see life steadily and see it whole. We protest, of course," said Father Gannon, "that our colleges should not be mirrors to reflect contemporary society; they should be torches to light and lead it. But our protest is drowned out by the sheer noise of modernity."

SLOGANS that contain whole truths or half-truths have always been and still are among the most attractive of Communist magnets. The pretended advocacy of "objectives entirely and undoubtedly legitimate" wins over "even those sections of the populace which on principle reject all forms of materialism and terrorism. . . . Thus the Commu-

nist ideal wins over many of the better-minded members of the community. These in turn become the apostles of the movement among the young intelligentsia, who are still too immature to recognize the intrinsic errors of the system." Pius XI said that. Catholics sometimes seem stumped before the Communist advocacy of what is right and good. Some seem to think that we must oppose everything espoused by the Party. They are afraid today to advocate neutrality and peace, because Communists advocate peace. They are afraid to befriend labor unions because Communists try to win labor's friendship by defending unions. Actually, there is danger now and then of our abandoning positions that are thoroughly American and thoroughly Catholic because Communists, for reasons of their own, adopt the same positions. Pius XI had an answer for that, too: "Let us not permit the children of this world to seem wiser in their generation than we, who by God's goodness are children of Light."

FACILE behaviorists who believe they can reduce social relationships to a formula may learn some wisdom from the latest declaration of Professor Einstein concerning the physical universe. For years, Mr. Einstein's consuming ambition has been to find an all comprehensive physical theory into which the entire world of material phenomena could be fitted. He maintains that he has accomplished this for the world of heavenly bodies including the earth, through his theory of relativity or "field theory." But the field theory breaks down completely when it comes to dealing with the atomic world. The atoms refuse to fit into any predetermined system of cause and effect and are governed by the "inexorable" law of indeterminacy or the "quantum" theory. The reconciliation of the field theory and the quantum theory would solve the riddle. But after years of the most passionate effort, Einstein finds himself further from the goal than ever. Furthermore, Einstein sees no hope that such an all-embracing theory can ever be attained. In other words, he admits the existence of a mystery beyond the power of the human mind to solve. If this be the physicist's admission concerning the world which he can see and handle, why scoff at the existence of mysteries in the world beyond the reach of any human measurement?

DOUBLE-ANTI exhibits are coming in from all parts of the country. Just now we are all frightfully concerned about national defense, 50,000 planes a year, bigger and newer warships, filling out the skeleton army. Hurrah for defense, and for all preparations to fight back against the invaders of our fair land. But, what about the termites, drilling into our schools, infecting our youth? There is plenty of anti-American propaganda being shot off to children. There is far too much anti-Religious poison being spread about. Have you discovered it? Send in any instances you have for the Double-Anti Contest.

THE CHURCH AND STATE— WHO WANTS A UNION?

Catholics, certainly, are satisfied with separation

JOHN LaFARGE

AS the election year progresses and the issues begin to take shape, the old question is again raised concerning the Catholic Church and the separation of Church and State. Already the Federal Council of Churches has brought the matter vigorously to the fore. In its first statement, made on January 26, concerning the President's appointment of Myron C. Taylor as his personal representative, with rank of Ambassador, at the Vatican, the Council warned lest this principle be violated. Commenting upon this statement, the Federal Council Bulletin for May observes: "Although the particular phrase, 'the separation of Church and State,' may be vague and inadequate, what lies at the heart of the idea is of high moment." And furthermore: "When our fathers embedded in the Constitution the principle that Congress should make no law 'respecting an establishment of religion,' it was no casual matter. They had abundant reason, both in European history and in their own experience in the New World, for appreciating the dangers of an official connection between Church and State."

Agitation concerning Church and State is bound to stir up many an angry feeling. There are charges and countercharges: suspicions become facts and facts are distorted into threats. It is not pleasant to contemplate, except by the politicians who have developed the art of fishing in troubled waters.

Fears on this point were expressed in a statement issued on May 13 by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. "What concerns us primarily," said that statement, "is that in these critical times we of America should be on our guard lest differences of opinion, legitimate in themselves, lead to acrimony and unjust suspicion."

Mobilization and counter-mobilization would certainly be gravely unfortunate. Since all of us may be assumed to be deeply convinced of this matter, our natural course is to inquire what further may be done about it, if the issue develops.

Obviously, the raising of the question calls for a careful examination and restatement, in the light of present circumstances, of what is involved in the American doctrine of the separation of Church and State. It also calls for a similar examination and restatement of the Catholic position on Church and State in general and in particular.

The more light that is brought upon this subject the less heat there is apt to be. The examination of the past reveals a course of events precisely the contrary to many of the preconceptions most readily assented to by those who fear the Catholic position. It shows that the separation of Church and State in the newly formed United States, far from being a mere policy of expediency unwillingly agreed to by a weak group of sullen dissidents, was urged and recommended for political and constitutional form by Catholic leaders and masterminds among the colonists. It shows that the English Catholic freemen of the early Maryland Colony were staunch in their adherence to the liberal traditions of their native land and that their descendants in Revolutionary times were in the forefront among the defenders of the principles of civic and religious freedom.

Further examination of the past reveals a long record of Catholic prelates, priests and laymen, from Cardinal Gibbons down, who have stood out with the complete approval of the highest authorities of their Church, as defenders of religious freedom in the United States. There is no need to recount their story here, as it has been abundantly told in the pages of AMERICA and elsewhere.

Nor does the examination of the present reveal a different story. The attitude of the Church upon this matter is an open book, which needs no glossing or minimizing. Catholics hold that there exist countries where Church and State may be united without violating the least of human rights. Such circumstances exist because of overwhelming religious unity, coupled with national tradition, as in the case of the newly concluded agreement between the Vatican and the Government of the Republic of Portugal.

Such an ethically justifiable union, however, is made possible only because each of the two parties remains rigorously within its own sphere. The State sticks to the affairs which belong to its own, the temporal order; the Church concerns itself with matters of Faith and morals and with temporal concerns only indirectly, to the extent that they are immediately related to the exercise of religion or the integrity of conscience.

The conclusion of such a union by Church and

State gives to neither party the right to impose religious belief by force. They are still bound by a rigorous obligation to respect the individual conscience. Nor do they believe (which is a capital point at issue) that the possibility in a foreign country of such a union may be used as a legitimate argument for advocating such conditions here.

Some of our non-Catholic fellow citizens fully recognize these elements in the Catholic position and have made them clear in their own writings and discourses; just as Catholics appreciate the apprehensions of their Protestant brethren on this score. Not so many non-Catholics, however, are aware of another element in the case, which should be understood, if the Catholic reaction to the raising of the Church-and-State issue is to be gauged. This is the feeling prevalent among Catholics that the issue of Church and State is being raised by certain groups merely for ulterior motives.

If Protestants are painfully aware of certain events in the past which make them fear what may happen when the Church exceeds its natural sphere and undertakes to regulate matters which belong to politics and government, Catholics likewise remember with alarm what happens when the State sets itself up as teacher of faith and morals. What is particularly to the point, they know that there is no better way to get the Church to exceed its sphere than to induce the State to invade the functions of the Church. The very abuses committed by Catholic churchmen in the past—tyrannical bishops, warlike Popes—were not the result of an *excess of Catholicism*, not too deep a draught of the intoxicating wine of religious doctrine and practice, but grew from spiritual and religious starvation, the fruit of a paternalistic State. The more that the State donned the priest's cope and chasuble, the less priestlike became the priest. The perfect illustration of this is seen in the condition of the Orthodox Church in Tsarist Russia. It became impossible to determine whether the attitude of the Church produced the Holy Synod—Church government by lay officials—or the Holy Synod produced that kind of a Church.

This consideration, however, has a very practical bearing in the United States because of the tendency of our Government to enter more and more into the field of a teacher—if not of faith—certainly of morals. This tendency is noticeable particularly in the field of family ethics. Some of the teaching is sound. But there is an uncomfortable suspicion that some of the agencies of the Federal Government which reach out far into the private affairs of the underprivileged among our people are utilizing their position of vantage to counsel practices which directly contravene Christian teaching concerning family ethics.

As for our State Governments, the tendency has become a fact, illustrated by birth-control clinics set up under official auspices in at least two States of the Union. More and more our State-supported high schools are becoming laboratories for experiments in social ethics. While they do not undertake to teach religion as such, they have little difficulty in teaching matters which concern religion, which

lie within the province of religious belief and practice. And it is precisely there that the issue falls.

I do not regard these primarily as party matters: New Deal or anti-New Deal. While the tendency may have received decided encouragement under the present Administration, it began under previous regimes. Nor will any political shifts greatly alter its course. Business as opposed to government may again assume the reins of economic power. But business will continue to leave the function of social teaching and social experiment to Government. The field of education remains, and must continue to remain, largely out of the province of business. Even in the fields where business directly deals with social conditions and family relationships, business leaders are too woefully devoid of the necessary spiritual and philosophical equipment to enable them to catch up with the armies of teachers and experimenters that have been formed under the protection of our national and State governments.

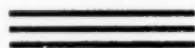
The result of this process is that the State, or rather the Government in its manifold forms, is more than "united" with the Church; it takes over the functions of the Church, it becomes—in certain well defined provinces—the Church. If the members of the Church protest that the public funds which they contribute by their money or labor are being used by the State to further doctrines contrary to the express teachings of their religion, immediately the cry is raised against them that they desire the union of Church and State.

The union of Church and State is precisely what they do *not* want. They would not take it if it were offered to them upon a silver platter. They fear it and abhor its possibilities. But they do want, and they do insist upon preserving for every citizen of the United States, regardless of race, color or creed, not only the nominal privilege to teach and have taught to his own children those principles of social and family ethics which are consonant with his religious faith, but something more definite. They insist that the State shall not so discriminate—in its allotment of State expenditures, in its provision for public and general utilities—against individuals and the schools which they attend, as practically to nullify the right of parents to have their children taught according to their own conscience and preserved from immoral and destructive influences. They look upon the continual enunciation of the Church-and-State issue as a mere Trojan Horse for totalitarianism masquerading as democracy. This is a view which, were it more generally understood, might greatly help to bring more sober thought and utterance to the election year.

Fear that they may lead to excess is given as a reason for curtailing religion's rights in the field of religion and social action. But it is only by guaranteeing religion's rights that we can keep the same excesses from returning in another form. Democracy itself is bound to turn into totalitarianism unless it can recognize religion's right to teach views on social ethics which differ from those maintained by the party in power. We will not be happy when we let totalitarianism in by the back door.

EVERY WAR IS A RELIGIOUS WAR

HILAIRE BELLOC



AT the root of every conflict between human communities (quite as much as between sections of a community in what is called avowedly a *religious* war) the matter at issue is the different object of worship held by either party and the different way in which each conceives human life to be arranged.

The modern world, having sunk largely into materialism, tries to explain war as a mere struggle for material objects: even for mere food or mere wealth. But even those who argue thus should remember that the frame of mind which attaches such supreme importance to material subsistence and wealth is itself of the nature of a religion: that is, it is a frame of mind which envisages certain objects in our existence as being supremely worth while, and others indifferent.

The reason that war always connotes a spiritual conflict at the back of the evident external conflict is that war involves the total sacrifice of men's selves. It involves the sacrifice of life, of comfort and well-being, of possessions, and the acceptance of horrible physical suffering and of fearful loss in the affections: for it involves the death of the young.

Now no man will make these sacrifices, still less, make them voluntarily, and even less, again, make them with enthusiasm, unless he makes them as sacrifices offered to something that he worships, and offered under conditions which he takes for granted to be the right conditions of the mind and the society.

Thus today, with modern men, the object of worship is the Nation: and it is taken for granted that suffering, however intense, and sacrifice, however extreme, must be endured for the sake of the Nation. The spiritual condition called "Patriotism" is, with the greater modern nations of our race, particularly in the West of Europe, a matter of course, and modern war is a function of that state of mind.

It was not always so. For though war was always, and always must be, religious in character, the object of religion was different with our fathers from what it is with ourselves. Some three centuries ago, or thereabouts, even the men of Western Europe were not yet so rooted in the religion of patriotism as to make it their chief spiritual motive and therefore the source of war.

It may be said of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that a man's loyalty should be rather to his Prince. One of the founders of modern French literature, a man who stands at the origin of the modern French state of mind, proclaimed it as an axiom (in the first part of the seventeenth century) "that the religion of an honest man should be the religion of his Sovereign." That was exactly

the principle which was planted and propagated by the Cecils and their followers in England. Treason from, say, 1500 to 1625, meant not treason to England, but treason to the Tudor or Stuart sovereign of the moment in England or to the rightful claimant of the throne in France.

Now the condition of European society today, the social atmosphere in which this war is being fought, is (unfortunately for us!) not simple or single; for the object of men's worship is not only the Nation—though this still remains the chief object—but also (and in contradiction with that object) a certain ideal of social justice.

This ideal is heretical and therefore poisonous, but it is sincerely held and arouses passionate devotion. It is a product of social injustice in the past. Men refuse to accept the traditions of the nineteenth century whereby the mere possession of capital justified the fortunate man in compelling the destitute man to work for him: a condition which the greatest of modern Popes described as one "but little removed from slavery."

In reaction against that inhuman system there has arisen a devotion to the ideal of Communism, and the conception that the abolition of private property would put an end to social ills. That idea is wildly wrong and productive in action of the most horrible results, including wholesale massacre; but it is an object of devotion nonetheless, and our civilization is today passing from the epoch of national war into an epoch of social war.

We feel this truth less in England than elsewhere, because modern industrial capitalism arose in England and here long seemed to everyone native and necessary. But even in England we are beginning to feel the effects of this new form of conflict. In Spain, it flamed up with the utmost intensity, and all over the world—though the degree of antagonism differs with the scale of the evils social injustice has provoked—this new source of conflict is growing.

The world is fortunate in possessing at such a moment the *norm* of the Catholic Church in its midst. The Catholic Church presents a certain code of morals and of conduct which, if it be sufficiently adhered to, can prevent both the social evils which more and more threaten us with universal conflict and the false Communist doctrine to which larger and larger numbers are beginning to look for social salvation.

It is the certitude and the proclaimed Divine Authority of the Church which today *alone* stand between the world and chaos: therefore, the position and the claim of the Faith must necessarily grow more and more apparent to the world as a whole as our time proceeds. No one else has an answer to the main questions which preoccupy the soul of man: "What am I? Whence came I? Whither do I go?"

But on the lower plane—lower, but vitally important—the temporal political plane, the Faith *also alone* possesses a rational philosophical system, applicable to human life and capable of rightly judging not only social injustice but mad extravagance in reaction against injustice. By a process of

elimination and especially under the test of war, it will be discovered that there is no other fixed standard on earth to which our conflicts can be referred.

Unfortunately, it is in the nature of man to accept truth usually slowly and always imperfectly. But in this case the mere force of things and therefore time itself fights on our side.

ITALY PLAYS AXIS AND ALLIES

JOHN P. DELANEY



DESPITE all the drama and tragedy of the war in Holland and Belgium, the eyes of the world are focussed on Italy. The Honorable Benito Mussolini, Il Duce of all the Italians and showman extraordinary, is taking care of that. Staged demonstrations against this, that and the other thing are nothing new in Italy. For that very reason, they may be harmless and they may be portentous.

The fundamental technique is simple. Straggling groups of school children drag themselves wearily through the streets all day long. Some carry posters. Some keep up a meaningless hooting as an accompaniment to normal schoolboy horse play. At regular intervals, leaders draw the straggling lines tight for a concerted shout or two, and that is the signal for a few grinning policemen to run in and "break it up." It is tiresome work for the youngsters, but at its worst an improvement over attendance at school. It becomes real fun when they are allowed to smash windows or build bonfires without fear of consequences.

The ordinary Italian is little affected by these tactics. He is irritated when, as part of the ceremony, he is ordered by a cocky young high school lad to display inflammatory placards in his shop window, but he obliges with good grace. He may rave when his particular window is singled out as the target for cobblestones, but there is always the possibility of compensation, and, even if there is no such hope, there is little he can do about it. Even the young demonstrators do not take their work seriously.

For all the surface childishness of these demonstrations, their nuisance and propaganda value is great. Foreign correspondents play them up, as they are expected to. Foreign governments look on with wary and resentful and worried eye—again as they are expected to. And no one ever knows when the order may go out that will turn these childish displays into organized violence and the prelude to international incidents.

That today's demonstrations against England and France may easily reach the violence stage is

obvious. French and Italians are traditionally hostile. Their relationship as allies in the World War did little to appease the enmity. The French rather look down on the Italians, and the new Italy considers France a decadent nation. The English are hated and loved in turn. The sanctions have not been forgotten and, even when relations are at their best, there is a condescension in the official British attitude that pricks Italian pride. Eden is back on the scene and Eden is a red flag even to the mildest of Italians. Most Italians believe that they could whip the French. Most Italians remember boastfully that the Duce twisted the Lion's tail in the days of the Ethiopian venture.

Some of the more violent or more militaristic of the Italians might welcome a test of strength with Great Britain in the Mediterranean. It is an article of faith with all Italians that the Mediterranean is by every right of nature an Italian sea, *mare nostrum*. They are convinced that they have not been receiving a square deal in the Suez Canal. Tunisia, Corsica, Djibuti are fighting words. They may eventually prove to be the price the Allies must pay Italy for her continued non-belligerency or for her espousal of the Allied cause.

Turning to the other side of the picture, the Axis has never been popular in Italy. Italians and Germans are antipathetic. For a while, the impression was growing in Italy that Hitler's hand was entirely too masterful in Italian affairs. Cocky German officers, walking the streets of Rome with the tread of conquerors, heightened the feeling of resentment. Italians have always had an unbiased source of news in the *Osservatore Romano* and in the Vatican Radio; and neither source has been silent about Hitlerian brutality. The Duce's popularity reached its lowest ebb in the days just before the war when it seemed that he was merely Hitler's consul in Rome, preparing to send Italian soldiers out to fight Hitler's battles.

In the crisis the Italians turned spontaneously to the Emperor, the Crown Prince, the Pope. When the war broke and Italy kept clear, the Duce began to come into his own again. Italians related with glee what Ciano had said to Hitler. They chuckled at the resurrection of an old picture of Mussolini, the Master, playing with Hitler, the mouse. They saw him playing once more the old game, the dangerous game, the masterful game, of pitting one side against the other, bargaining now with the Allies, now with Germany, now with threats, now with propaganda, again with promises. It is a game Italians understand, and it seemed to be a pledge to them that the Duce, their Duce once more, would never allow Italy to become involved in the war.

Have recent events changed all that? The demonstrations, the press attacks on England and France, the stepped-up glorification of German arms, the outbursts against the truth-telling *Osservatore Romano*, beloved of the Romans for its truth-telling, the stories of mobilization (minimized by insistence on the total lack of defense preparations in Italy's most exposed cities)—are all these indications that the Duce is veering off on a new tack, or that he is close to a vital decision?

No one knows. The Duce is one part Machiavelli, one part war-god. The Machiavelli has toyed with the nations. The war-god has built a machine. For use? For its bargaining power? For its psychological effect on his people? Who knows? The Roman emperor with out-thrust jaw that struts in his dreams must be philosopher, statesman, law-maker—and conqueror. Is the war-god really itching to test his machine on a large scale?

Beneath the uncertainty, this much seems certain and fundamental. All this feverish activity of recent days is a notice served on the world that Italy does not intend to be treated as a pawn on anyone's board, but as a nation, an empire with rights and aspirations of her own. There are, also, some fundamental certainties which may be the bases of any final decision: 1) for all the ruthlessness of his dictatorship, the Duce has a sensitive ear for the murmurings of his people, and he knows that in the final run he cannot embark on any huge adventure capable of completely alienating their loyalty; 2) his decision will not be determined by love or hatred of the Allies or of Germany, but on one thing only, the advantage of Italy; 3) the Duce remains one of the world's astutest bargainers and a ruthless realist in his bargaining. Neither sentiment nor ethics enter into his deliberations. He will enter the war only at his own price and on what he considers the winning side. And that side will be called upon to pay the price in advance, before one Italian soldier marches or one Italian plane flies.

WHY I SUSPECT THE YOUTH CONGRESS

FARRELL SCHNERING



THERE seems to be much rejoicing among civilized folk these days, for it appears that the American Bolos are on the run as a result of Stalin's latest and greatest pieces of treachery. In really optimistic circles there is prognostication as to just when the Red house will collapse in total ruin.

Now it is a fact that Browder and his boys suffer a temporary dilemma. Concussions from Red army guns shelling Finnish towns did knock flat and leave dazed many a united frontier. And, 'tis true, a few of them have covered their faces and jumped the Red fence. That once great forward wall of Twentieth Century Americanism, the American League For Peace and Democracy, has been given the Bolshevik black bottle and is no more. Yes, there is occasion to rejoice, but that had best be done in all modesty as a safeguard against false optimism.

Foes of Bolshevism will do well to give serious

thought to the question of youth in a troubled world, for the future progress of Bolshevism rests heavily upon the youth. In this respect, the largest of the Kremlin's alleged American "transmission belts" remains on a favored status. The American Youth Congress energetically and too successfully marches onward and all the while reaps the maternal blessings of the First Lady who has recently written, in *Liberty*, "Why I Still Believe In the Youth Congress," wherein she staunchly defends that organization and bids it God-speed.

An understanding of the Youth Congress greatly depends upon knowledge of those great Bolshevik intangibles, the Innocents' Clubs. They are but paper on which is inscribed an array of names that carry great weight, with trusted stooges tossing that weight about as needed. The vast majority of the claimed membership of the A.Y.C. knows nothing of that body save name and directives announcing its policies. Small wonder the executive body experiences slight difficulty in making decisions for thousands of youths.

One of the great deceptions flowing from the Congress is the term "youth." I have met and known a number of its leading lights and therefore must set them down as well preserved, youthful appearing adults, many of whom grew radical because of disillusionment from voting Republican in 1928.

Since the Youth Congress at Detroit, in 1935, which I well recall, this organization has loomed large and created much controversy. During this period I bore, among other things, responsibility for directing Communist fortunes at the University of Wisconsin. Among the loyal there we counted a Jewess in the graduate school. Her age was in the high twenties. She was a coming Marxist, fired with an ambition to give her all for The Revolution. We proceeded to groom her for the coming Congress.

At that gathering, Clarence Hathaway, editor of the *Daily Worker*, was a principal speaker, along with J. B. Matthews, then America's number one stooge. The young lady from the graduate school proved to be a mighty tower of Communist strength. Each night there were "fraction" meetings in the Hotel Statler where the Bolos counted victories of the day and plotted for the morrow. There was much laughing at how the guest preachers and civic-minded ladies had been sucked into giving approval. So we came out of Detroit rejoicing, for the Congress had been swept into the Stalinist bag. Understand, dear reader, the youngsters had not been made Communists. We celebrated only the victory of gaining control of the policies of the Congress.

Months before the Congress, I had brought to Milwaukee a young man to act as business manager of the Communist paper of which I was editor. This particular youth had voted for Mr. Hoover, in 1928, but we were sure his heart was contrite and we had confidence in his ability. He seemed a bit young, but our lack of forces resulted in his being assigned to development of the Congress in Wisconsin; but first, we gave him a new name.

We had bigger things in mind for the lady. We brought her to Milwaukee to test her mettle at real Bolshevik work. She spoke at factory gates, organized for the Young Communist League and proved she had the stuff. So impressed was the National Committee of the Party that she was sent to the Lenin School, in Moscow, to be trained for leadership in the American youth movement. She returned and shortly became executive secretary of the American Youth Congress. Thereafter, the Congress hewed more closely to Stalinist wishes. This young lady has since carried the Kremlin banner high among social workers; perhaps her age occasioned her retirement from the American Youth Congress.

Then there is one Abbot Simon, legislative director of the Congress, who declared that Russia's side of the question of Finland had not been heard, therefore the judgment of youth ought to be withheld. Simon once visited Milwaukee, in the interest of the Congress. Here he called upon a prominent Catholic layman to discuss youth problems. He declared the Communist angle of the American Youth Congress was no issue for him; that he supported the organization because he felt it would provide a front through which Jewish youth might speak and act for their interests. He cited his close friendship with Carl Ross, secretary of the Young Communist League. The layman said he wished he could meet a fellow like Ross. Simon departed and very shortly Ross was in town to discuss the Congress with this layman.

It has been suggested that certain prominent people support the American Youth Congress, in the hope of making it truly American. But those schooled in the ways of the Bolos laugh loudly at this conjecture. A great lesson, having to do with capturing groups influenced by Communists, was set forth at the convention of the American Student Union, held last January at Madison, Wis. The Student Union was formed some four or five years ago after the Bolos scrapped their old National Student League and called for the creation of a united student movement. The American Student Union is the organized backbone of the Congress.

Certain facts of life had caused many youngsters to arrive in Madison crying out loudly against Stalin's base treachery. Joe Lash and Molly Yard came as incumbent leaders of the Student Union but they came with doubts and misgivings as to the integrity of Uncle Joe Stalin. These two are well remembered for their valorous behavior at the Vassar meeting of the American Youth Congress, during the period of Stalin's collective security dream. Up to this time the Congress had committed youth to the Oxford pledge: an oath against participation in any war. But at Vassar it was required that youth be willing to die for Stalin and the glorious collective security war. But the youths were really sincere in their desire for peace and refused to drop the pledge.

At this point, Lash and Miss Yard came to the front allegedly for the Stalinist position. After clever maneuvering, the minority decision became the majority, the Oxford Pledge went over the

fence, and thousands of youths placed themselves on record for the Kremlin's much desired collective security.

At the time of the Madison meeting, the godless juggernaut was plowing through the snows of Finland; the Commissars' were seeking "neutrality" elsewhere, in accordance with its totalitarian meaning. Lash seemed to feel this country should support the Allies and perhaps condemn the Finnish conquest. He was clearly vacillating on the Party "line." Innocent youngsters stood and fought stubbornly to cast off the Communist bonds. But all to no avail. They could not match the craftiness of the secret Party "fraction" that plotted by night. There was heated wrangling but the convention condoned the actions of Stalin by refusing to pass a resolution condemning the invasion of Finland and the German pact. All this was brought about upon the grounds of Stalinist reasoning that taking sides on the Finnish question would not be in keeping with strict "neutrality"; further, American youth at such great distance could not understand the happenings in Europe. And that was submitted despite the fact that just a few months previous they knew Europe well enough to support loudly the Loyalist puppet in Spain.

Joe Lash and Molly Yard seem to have been dealt with summarily, perhaps for supporting the "forces of reaction." They were displaced by two alleged Stalinist supporters. Just who among the youth there were Communists seems unimportant; the fact and lesson are that the opposition went down in inglorious defeat and the Stalinists got what they went after.

This Student-Union backbone of the American Youth Congress is a real organization, and Communists consider their influence over it invaluable. Through that organization they have been encouraging sympathizers and ordering Party members to join the Reserve Officers Military Training Corps. They have done the same through the Youth Congress and sent young men into the Naval Reserve, National Guard, and Citizens Military Training Camps. Thus, Communists have provided for a penetration of the armed forces of our country. Serious, indeed, is this aspect of Communist influence in the Youth Congress.

Support of the American Youth Congress by persons in high positions seems a deplorable circumstance. Surely it will do them no good eventually. Certainly it cannot be best for our country. But, by way of conclusion, let us leave the Congress to consider the status of American Bolshevism and that peculiar hybrid, the Bolshevik Innocent. Next give thought to the new needs of Comrade Stalin and the temporary plight of the Communist Party. When this is done one very important question seems to have been posed: How innocent are the Innocents? With the Youth Congress and all usable fronts still intact and the Communists suffering no really decisive defeats in the C.I.O., the enemies of Bolshevism will do well to avoid feasting too joyously upon the first fruits of victory lest they ride to ruin on a wave of false encouragement.

THE CURTAINS RISE AND FALL

ELIZABETH JORDAN

THE PLAYGOER dropped into an easy chair before her study fire, rested her slippers on the fender, braced her head against the chairback, and gave herself to reflection. Half an hour ago she had seen the final curtain fall on the fourth new play of the week. She had attended all of them, and she was very tired. Exhaustedly, she cast her memory back over the various offerings.

Three of them, she was sure, would be off the stage within a few days; for the modern stage is a No Man's Land, incessantly raked by the machine guns of the critics. The one remaining might survive a few weeks longer. It belonged to the maddening group of plays that will neither live gloriously nor die swiftly. A decade or so ago it might have been nursed along to at least the semi-success of a few months' run, long enough to make possible the sale of the picture rights. Not now, when the fate of plays is often settled in a night. One of two fates faces new productions: immediate success, or an almost immediate journey to the producer's storehouse.

Blinking dreamily at the leaping flames before her, the Playgoer let her thoughts run on. Between September and March, she had seen more than fifty new plays. Of these half a dozen had proved smash hits; five were second-line successes; and the rest had made their tragic journey in the tumble. Half a dozen of those victims, she was sure, if produced a decade ago, would have been nursed to a run, but not now. She could recall without effort several others which might have been saved by a little more patience, a little more vision or revision or both. And the Easter season had brought two sturdy English melodramas with Pauline Lord and Flora Robson doing superb work in them.

And yet who could tell? The putting on of plays seemed now more than ever before a matter of guess work and of chance. Occasionally, a producer loomed on the horizon whose judgment and imagination suggested genius. Then, suddenly, he put on a play which the rankest amateur should have known enough to toss aside. Occasionally, too, a producer whose previous offerings had been sheer piffle, found and recognized something so delicately and subtly beautiful that the whole town rose in homage to it and to him. At long, long intervals a play unanimously condemned by the critics developed into a smash hit.

The Chorus Lady, in which James Forbes invested all his own money and the money of most of his friends before it caught on and made his fortune, was the past's classic example of that. *Hellz-a-Poppin*, she remembered, was the most recent in-

stance. Hardly a critic in town had found a good word to say for that, but look at it now! Running two years. Sold out for weeks in advance. Usually the slow shaking of a critic's head is the modern equivalent of down-turned thumbs at the Roman arena, and as final. Not all their shaking in unison could check the public's passion for *Hellz-a-Poppin*. So what?

She found the answer without effort. There are times when the public takes the bit between its teeth and goes its own way. Something comforting for the producers to remember, that! Uncertain, though. Perhaps the whole success of *Hellz-a-Poppin* lies in the fact that it brings laughter—loud, vulgar, roaring laughter—to a sick world that needs laughter as never before. Needs it—and is finding it there instead of tears and the philosophy of grim endurance that characterize most of the recent plays.

She marveled over the courage of playwrights and producers. How can men summon up the nerve to put time and money into a new play? Public taste is always uncertain, often inexplicable. It will accept *Hellz-a-Poppin* and turn down Maurice Evans' *Napoleon* and Eddie Dowling's *Here Come the Clowns*. It will howl with rapture over *Kiss the Boys Goodbye*, and it will let the Irish Players perform to half-empty houses. So the guesswork goes on, *must* go on, and the plays go off. And with every play that goes off scores of hearts are heavy with discouragement, scores of stage people are again out of work.

The playwrights, she told herself, are adding more than their quota to the general theatrical muddle of the season. Even the best guessers among the producers are being misled by them. The average producer's mental process is simple. This playwright has written a good play, so he is a good playwright. The producer signs a contract for his next play, which proves hopelessly bad.

It is, surprisingly often, as apt to be bad as if the writer had been a bad playwright. He is not, but his head has been a bit turned by his first success. He wants another and an immediate success. He turns to those efforts of his which have been rejected in the past, or to old ideas which he himself had cast aside, or to some big theme of the moment on which he has a few vague ideas. Then, like Mr. Coward, he tosses off a new play some Saturday afternoon when he has a cold. Or, worst of all, being a humorist, he suddenly decides to write a tragedy; or being a tragedian he abruptly resolves to go in for comedy.

Whatever he writes, the producer stages. Has he, the playwright, not written one fine play? Has he,

the producer, not demonstrated in several successes his unerring flair for the script that holds success? Another new play goes on and off, and Broadway has another headache.

Occasionally, the Playgoer reflected, a really fine play comes and goes before the general public has realized its quality. Occasionally, and still more rarely, a subtle and exquisite play comes along, on which no one but the producer would bet and on which he, after a few rehearsals, would not bet much. But it creeps onto the stage and there reveals itself as a winner of hearts and fortunes. That perhaps is what keeps hope alive in theatrical breasts, that and the great gamble.

The Playgoer sighed. Why was she always so stirred by the plight of these lads who annually bob up to boast that they are ready to bet their shirts on a friend's play, and who end by doing it and losing the shirts? She recalled half a dozen of them, so young, so cocksure, so pathetically like dazed little boys when they returned to the trenches after their brief excursion. But she was getting too fanciful about them and, incidentally, about the whole subject.

But there were pleasanter reflections. The worried crease left her brow as she suddenly recalled some former successes. Her memories went away back—to the wobbly legs and shaking voice of Clyde Fitch, for example, as he vainly tried to make a speech on the opening night of *Beau Brummel*; and to the night of Edwin Booth's last appearance in public, when he sat in the theatre seat just in front of her at the Empire. He had come to see the younger Salvini, but throughout the performance he sat turned away from the stage, with head down and unseeing eyes on the red carpet of the aisle at his right.

Other memories crowded up in her as she recalled the stage pageant of the passing years. Her mind fastened on the dramatization of *Little Women*. Marian de Forest, of Buffalo, had done that as a labor of love. She knew every line of the book. She had seen a play in it, a play that would please her. She was not sure it would please anyone else. She showed the script to Jessie Bonstelle. Miss Bonstelle took fire at the first reading, and with swift steps and the jingling of many bells took the manuscript to William A. Brady. Miss Bonstelle was always an inspiring talker. She and Mr. Brady had made money on several ventures. But this time Mr. Brady listened bleakly. He had never read *Little Women*. He had never even heard of it. At Miss Bonstelle's passionate insistence he consulted the members of his family at the dinner table that night. There were three of them, his wife, Grace George, their son, William A. Brady, Jr., then a small boy, Alice Brady, then a school girl, Mr. Brady's daughter by his first wife.

"Any of you ever heard of a book called *Little Women*?" the head of the family inquired of them gloomily.

"I read some of that," young Billy said. He added disgustedly. "But I didn't read much. Its a book about girls!"

"It's a book for girls and boys and men and

women," his mother pointed out. "I read it a dozen times when I was a girl. I loved it."

Her husband cocked an eye at her.

"Got any action?" he wanted to know.

"It has lovely scenes," Alice broke in. "I've read it, too. I cried quarts over the death of Beth. Has the play got that scene in it, Dad?"

Brady did not know, but Alice could find out. After dinner he handed her the manuscript play and Alice found the scene of Beth's death. Brady listened to it with real emotion. Alice's mother had died while Alice was a baby playing with her toys in the next room; and William A. Brady, who had divided his attention between his unconscious child and his dying wife, had held that memory throughout his life as representing the emotional peak of human drama. The next day he accepted *Little Women* on the strength of that great emotional scene.

The Playgoer knew both Miss Bonstelle and Miss de Forest and shared with them the thrill of the excitement over the production. On the opening night Marian de Forest was outwardly calm, but inwardly distraught.

"Mr. Brady has done too much preliminary press work," she told the Playgoer. "He has said too much and promised too much. *Little Women* should have come into New York with rubbers on. As it is, it hasn't a chance with these hard-boiled New York critics and this 'show-me' first night audience. They'll tear it into inch pieces."

But *Little Women* played that night to a packed and thrilled house, and at the drop of the curtain most of the "hard-boiled" auditors and critics were in tears.

The Playgoer's fire was burning low. She stirred, half rose and sank back in her chair again. She was recalling the first night of the first production of *Outward Bound*, with Mrs. Otis Skinner weeping on one side of her and Frances Hodgson Burnett, also in tears, on the other. Later Maud Skinner had confessed that she had to spend the following three days in bed to rest after the emotional strain of the play. But "Fluffy" (Mrs. Burnett) was busily painting the lily. She had seen ways in which, beautiful as it was, the play could be made even better. She was right about it, too, as she poured her theories into the Playgoer's ear while the two young lovers of the stage, alone of all their ghostly company, slowly returned to life and love. Fluffy had a way of discussing plays during her performance. It was sometimes a strain to her companions.

The Playgoer stirred again and this time she got up and went to bed. She was beginning to think of the opening performance of *Our Town*, but she must not. *That* would keep her awake all night! She remembered something reassuring. Despite triumphs and failures, and all the rest of it, the playwrights and producers of today are still at work. So are the critics. The combination has never got on particularly well, and probably never will, but as long as this old world continues to wobble in space they will get together—and let the rest of us look on.

CHRONICLE

THE ADMINISTRATION. Concerning Queen Wilhelmina's statement protesting against Nazi violation of Dutch neutrality, President Roosevelt said: "I think I can say that I am in full sympathy with the very excellent statement. . . . It is worth reading." . . . Speaking to representatives of Pan-American countries attending the eighth American Scientific Congress in Washington, Mr. Roosevelt declared: "And this very day, the tenth of May, three more independent nations have been cruelly invaded by force of arms. . . . I am glad that we Americans of the free Americas are shocked, that we are angered by the tragic news that has come to us from Belgium and the Netherlands and Luxembourg. . . . Today we know . . . that until recent weeks too many citizens of the American republics believed themselves wholly safe . . . from the impact of the attacks on civilization which are in progress elsewhere." The President emphasized that all the Americas are now closer in "terms of movement of men, guns and planes" to the "modern conquerors" than was the case with the lands invaded by such ancient aggressors as Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Though he and the assembled representatives of the twenty-one American republics were "pacifists," nevertheless, the President asserted: "I believe that by overwhelming majorities in all the Americas, you and I . . . will act together to protect and defend by every means our science, our culture, our American freedom and our civilization." . . . To a telegram of King Leopold asking the support of President Roosevelt's "moral authority" for Belgium "brutally attacked by Germany, which had entered into the most solemn engagement with her," Mr. Roosevelt in a message to the King replied that "the cruel invasion by force of arms has shocked and angered the people of the United States and, I feel sure, their neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. The people of the United States hope, as do I, that policies which seek to dominate peaceful and independent peoples through force and military aggression may be arrested . . . that Belgium may preserve integrity and freedom." . . . President Roosevelt again appealed to Premier Mussolini, asking the Italian leader to prevent further spread of the war.

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CONGRESS. The House Immigration Committee approved a bill to deport Harry Bridges, radical C.I.O. leader, to Australia. Representative Allen, sponsor of the measure, declared: "Abundant evidence was introduced to show Bridges was a Communist." . . . A House subcommittee which conducted an eight-month investigation of the WPA in thirteen States reported the operation of the WPA was marked by fraud, inefficiency and subversive activities. "Organized pressure groups of

definitely Left-wing beliefs have exerted great influence and in some cases have exercised virtual control over many supervisory and some administrative officials and over individual projects," the subcommittee counsel declared. The subcommittee minority report added political manipulation to the charges against the WPA. . . . By a vote of 46 to 34, the Senate defeated a resolution to invalidate President Roosevelt's Fourth Government Reorganization Order, thereby nullifying the action of the House. The President's Order will thus go into effect. It strips the Civil Aeronautics Authority of its statutory independence, makes it a bureau in the Commerce Department, and abolishes the Air Safety Board. The Administration victory was made possible largely by Senators not up for reelection this year. . . . Without a roll call, the House, 247 to 31, passed the Rankin Bill to pension all dependent widows, children and parents of World War veterans, regardless of whether their deaths came from service disabilities or not. . . . Representative Bulwinkle, of North Carolina, introduced a bill to amend the Johnson Act, which prohibits loans to defaulting nations, and the Neutrality Act, by allowing the Allies to borrow money for purchasing materials that would not be used directly in warfare. . . . Following Representative May's resolution to repeal the Johnson Act, Congressman Fish declared the May proposal "let the New Deal cat out of the bag." . . . Said Senator Johnson, of California, author of the act: "Experience taught us that the surest way to get into war is to let our money precede us." . . . The Senate, 45 to 36, passed the Townsend Bill, terminating the President's authority under the 1934 Silver Purchase Act to buy foreign silver. Under the Silver Purchase Act the United States has acquired 2,000,000,000 ounces of silver at inflated prices.

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WASHINGTON. Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg were put under the provisions of the Neutrality Act. . . . The Administration placed a ban on the liquidation, without Treasury license, of Belgian, Luxembourg and Dutch investments in this country, thus prevented them from falling into the hands of the invading power. . . . The State Department disclosed it did not consider the landing of French and British troops in the Netherlands West Indies as an infringement of the Monroe Doctrine, no change of sovereignty being involved. . . . The United States will be pleased to join with Uruguay and the other American nations in a protest to Germany over the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, the State Department informed Uruguay and Panama. Uruguay suggested the protest in a letter to President Boyd of Panama. . . . A proposal by the Argentine Government to change

the status of the American republics from neutrality to non-belligerency did not originate at the insistence of Washington, Secretary Hull maintained.

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AT HOME. The House of Representatives agreed to an amendment giving an additional \$212,000,000 for farm parity payments. . . . Senator Lodge declared that studies revealed the United States could not put more than 75,000 fully equipped troops in the field, "if we count tanks, semi-automatic rifles, artillery and other essentials." He introduced a resolution to set up a joint House-Senate committee to survey defense needs. Declaring \$7,000,000,000 had been appropriated for defense in the last six years, Senator Clark, of Missouri, demanded to know what has been done with this money, "this money that has been poured down a rat-hole." Senators Thomas, Barkley defended the army from the charges it lacked equipment. . . . The Senate Naval Committee recommended an eleven-per-cent expansion of the fleet, while a Navy Department representative urged the House Naval Affairs Committee to start the nation's shipyards operating on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis. . . . Appearing in person before a joint session of the Senate and House, President Roosevelt asserted "the possibility of attacks on vital American zones," urged a stepping up of production capacity to "at least 50,000 planes a year," acceleration of the program to supply necessary military equipment, a twenty-four-hour basis for all army and navy contracts. Over and above current defense funds, he asked an immediate additional appropriation of \$896,000,000 and an additional authorization of \$286,000,000.

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GREAT BRITAIN. Although he still had a majority in the House of Commons, on May 10, Neville Chamberlain resigned as Prime Minister, informing the House it was apparent that national unity "could be secured under another Prime Minister though not under myself." . . . At the invitation of King George, Winston Churchill became Prime Minister on the same day, immediately formed a coalition government with leaders of all important parties included. Mr. Chamberlain remained in the Churchill Cabinet as Lord President of the Council, while Lord Halifax retained his post as Foreign Secretary. Albert V. Alexander became First Lord of the Admiralty, Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Opposition Liberal leader, Air Secretary, Herbert Morrison, Labor leader, Minister of Supply. . . . To direct prosecution of hostilities, Prime Minister Churchill set up an inner war cabinet of five, consisting of himself, Neville Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, Clement R. Attlee, leader of His Majesty's Opposition, and Arthur Greenwood, deputy leader of the Opposition. . . . Telling the House: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat," Prime Minister Churchill called for a vote of confidence in his new regime. The Parliament responded with an overwhelming ballot of approval, 379 to 2. . . . Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, with her family, and

members of the Dutch Cabinet, fled to England, set up Netherlands rule in London. . . . British troops occupied Iceland. . . . Allied forces landed in the Netherlands West Indies Islands of Curaçao and Aruba, off the Venezuela coast, with permission of the Netherlands Government.

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WAR. A major turning point occurred on May 17 when Nazi forces, employing all possible equipment, drove through French fortifications on the Sedan line. Three momentous conflicts developed. The first took shape in a direct drive toward Paris; another involved the Nazi strategy of the pincer-movement in Northern France; the third was an intensification of the advance through Belgium with the sea as an objective. German sources reported the Nazi advance was rapid beyond expectation and that the Allies were demoralized. The Allied source reported British and French armies had concentrated on vital points of defense. Previously, following a daybreak invasion of the Lowlands, German legions quickly overran Luxembourg. In Holland and Belgium, the Nazi mechanized forces were preceded by air armadas bombing airdromes and communications centers. Simultaneously, parachute troops dropped in many Belgian and Dutch airports and city outskirts. Nazi parachute forces penetrated Rotterdam, fought defenders in the streets. After quick seizure of the lightly defended Dutch northern provinces, the Nazi war machine penetrated the water defense system, punctured the Grebbe Line, conquered Holland in five days. To prevent further civilian loss, on May 14 the Dutch High Command capitulated. After May 15, the Nazis occupied all Netherlands.

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INTERNATIONAL. In a message to King Leopold, Pope Pius said: "In a moment when, for the second time against its will and right, the Belgian people sees its territory exposed to the cruelties of war, we, being profoundly moved, send Your Majesty and to the entire nation so beloved by us, our apostolic blessing." The Pontiff stated he prayed "to the All-Powerful God that this stern trial may end with the restoration of full liberty and independence" to Belgium. King Leopold's message to the Pope asked that "Your Holiness, head of the Catholic Church . . . may with your high moral authority support the cause for which we are fighting." . . . Somewhat similar messages were forwarded by the Holy Father to Queen Wilhelmina and the Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg. . . . Mother Rose Philippine Duchesne, Foundress of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in the United States, was beatified by Pope Pius. . . . The Vatican organ, *Osservatore Romano*, condemned the Nazi invasion of the Lowlands. An unofficial Fascist boycott of the paper was launched. . . . An Italian Foreign Office report denounced the "intolerable" Allied blockade. In Italian cities, crowds, composed largely of school boys, staged anti-Allied demonstrations. . . . The Spanish Government reaffirmed its policy of neutrality.

THE WAR DRAWS NEARER

THE HEAT is being turned on. The national temperature is gradually rising. We are coming to the boiling point. And that means the entry of the United States into this European war.

Everybody, and that means literally everybody who is an American, states with emphasis that nobody wants war. Then, everybody adds that nobody is sure we will not get into this war. And that means that the American people, roused up by some reason or other, at some time or other, is inflammable. Against their present judgments and their better wills, they may get into it.

The spirit for war is becoming daily more prevalent. Every new advance made by the Nazi armies persuades more Americans that this country must oppose Hitler. Every new neutral nation that is flattened out by his ruthlessness rouses new fears about our own country. The vague statements of a month ago, that Hitler must be stopped, have become tragically definite statements. The failures of the Allies are being urged as reasons for our entry, to save ourselves.

The propaganda for war is on. It flows from the highest sources. There is more open talk about extending credit to the Allies, contrary to our established legislation. There is Congressional suggestion that the United States make loans to the Allies, a certain way of involving us. There is evident a belief on the part of the President and the Administration spokesmen that we must advance from being neutral to that of being pro-belligerent.

For years, army and naval leaders have been pleading for preparedness. Their arguments were sound, if sanely interpreted. This past week, national defense is whipped up into a panic. Suddenly, there is a demand for an appropriation of three billions of dollars, to be spent within the next year. "Hang the expense," the President is quoted as exclaiming. "The nation must be prepared." It should have been prepared, systematically, through the years, and economically. Now there is the fury of preparation with the overtones of war.

The voice of the clergy is being raised. "We cannot stand by. . . . We are directly concerned. . . . Our fullest help. . . . Send everything we have, short of troops." It may not be long before the moralists preach that our cause is just and holy.

If the war in Europe waits long enough, the belligerent powers within the United States will drive this country into that war: by moralities and idealisms and slogans; by fears and the futures; by credits and loans; by pleas for national defense; by intra-governmental entanglements. The process of entry can then work according to schedule: supply all material resources; furnish all war equipment; lend our navy; cooperate with our air forces. It is not needed to send our boys to fight, they say, just now. But conscription is systematized, and all is ready.

We say we want no war. We act as if we wanted war. Let us halt, and think, before it is too dreadfully late.

EDITOR

HAVE YOU A CONGRESSMAN?

A CONGRESSMAN is a neighbor whom you ought to know very well. He is the man from your district whom you send off to Washington to help run the Government. He represents you and all the voters in your part of the country. He agrees or disagrees to tax you. He decides on how much money the Government should spend. He votes on all legislation. He can ballot you into war—or he can keep your sons out of war. Only he can finance a war. Do you know him? Can you trust him to represent you, what you want and what you think? Be careful about your Congressman.

MAY 25,

ABOUT a century and one half ago, on May 25, 1787, the Constitutional Convention opened in Philadelphia. Its beginnings were not auspicious, and within a few weeks the project seemed doomed to failure. Experience had shown the futility of the Articles of Confederation. What could be devised to take their place the Convention was slow to recognize.

But there were great men in that gathering, greater in all probability than had ever come together at any place to plan for the salvation of a nation. While Madison and Wilson, supported by abler but lesser men, discussed plans and policies, it was the influence of Franklin and, above all, of Washington, that kept the delegates together, and at last made possible a written Constitution which created a central authority, while it preserved necessary local independence.

There is for us today a solemn warning in the remark which James McHenry, a delegate from Maryland, quotes from Franklin. He records in his notes: "A lady asked Dr. Franklin, 'Well Doctor what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?' 'A republic,' replied the Doctor, 'if you can keep it.'" We have kept it, after a fashion. But there are times when our fashion seems wholly at variance with the purposes of the men who framed the Constitution, and with the hopes of the people who adopted it.

Fifty years after the Convention, young Abraham Lincoln gave a speech in Springfield on law observance. It was his opinion that we could "keep" this Republic only as long as

DO WE NEED A THIRD TIMER?

MONTHS ago we stated that we found no good reason why any President should serve three terms. We still find no need for a Chief Executive to serve from the eighth to the twelfth year. The New Dealers, however, are trying to saddle the country on President Roosevelt for another term, and the President seems willing to bear the burden. Apparently, we are crossing a stream, and we should not swap horses. France swapped Reynaud for Daladier, and England swapped Churchill for Chamberlain. They were wise to swap. The United States, too, would be helped by a November swap.

Y 25, 1787

Americans revered and obeyed the Constitution, and he expressed this view in the exuberant language which he by degrees trained himself to discard. "As the patriots of '76 did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor," he declared. "Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear up the charter of his own and his children's liberty." This devotion to law and the Constitution, he urged, should "become the political religion of the nation." (January 27, 1837.)

But, as Lincoln soon came to realize, a political religion is not worth much unless it is shaped and governed by religion of the mind and heart. Washington was keenly aware of that truth, and thought it of such importance that he bade us cherish religion and morality as the firmest supports of peace and good government.

The Constitution was framed for and by a religious-minded people. It is vital and controlling today only to the extent that all vestiges of religion have not been wiped out in the hearts of our people. But when religion goes, of what worth will our Constitution be?

The most serious problem before the American people today is neither industrial nor economic. It is the problem of how to bring up a generation which will, as Washington urged us, "respect and cherish" religion and morality.

THE POPE AND THE INVADERS

MOMENTOUS, from the standpoint of the Church's policy, is Pope Pius XII's condemnation of the Nazi invasion of Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. It is so momentous that it calls, on our part, for a review of three matters. What has the Holy Father actually said? How does this compare with what he and his predecessors have said in the past? What is there startlingly new and unusual about the circumstances of the present utterance?

To the rulers of all three nations—King Leopold, Queen Wilhelmina, Grand Duchess Charlotte—the Pope expressed the wish that their respective countries may enjoy again "full liberty and independence" (Belgium); "the restoration of justice and liberty" (Holland); to "live in liberty and independence" (Luxembourg).

For both Belgium and Holland, the Pope declares the invasion to be against the nation's "will and right." And in the case of Belgium he adds the words "for the second time." "For the second time against its will and right, the Belgian people sees its territory exposed to the cruelties of war."

These words point back to the allocution of Pope Benedict XV on January 22, 1915, after the German invasion of Belgium and the Russian invasion of Galicia, in Austria. "It is the office of the Roman Pontiff," said Benedict, "established by God, the interpreter and the supreme Avenger of eternal law, to proclaim that it is never permitted to anyone, for any motive, to violate justice. We openly proclaim this very thing, firmly rebuking all violations of right, wherever they have been committed." "The invasion of Belgium," wrote, on July 6, 1915, Cardinal Gasparri, Papal Secretary of State to the Belgian Minister at the Vatican, Jules Van Den Heuvel, "is directly included in these words of condemnation" just quoted. Nor could such a crime be justified, Gasparri added, by any claims, based upon documents found after the invasion, that Belgium had plotted against her own neutrality. In 1919, Pope Benedict, writing to the Bishops of Belgium, spoke of "Our solemn protestations against the injustices and violations of right committed with regard to Belgium."

Already, in his first Encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, Pope Pius XII demanded, as essential to the observance of the natural law, "fidelity to compacts agreed upon and sanctioned in conformity with the principles of the law of nations." But the Nazi invasions concern something far graver even than a violation of compacts. They are a manifestation of that "drift toward chaos" which Pope Pius XII sees as the sign of our age. "In Our days," he observes, "dissensions come not only from the surge of a rebellious passion, but also from a deep spiritual crisis which has overthrown the sound principles of private and public morality."

More and more, then, it appears that our Holy Father is being driven to proclaiming openly an inescapable conclusion which he doubtless has long since formed in his own mind, but through charity toward his children in all nations has endeavored

to avoid expressing in too categorical a form. This conclusion is that it is impossible to separate the Nazi deeds of violence from the anti-Christian philosophy by which they are inspired.

How definitely the issue is taking shape in the mind and in the utterance, as well, of the Holy See, is indicated by the Pope's words to a group of pilgrims on May 15, as quoted by a United Press dispatch of that date, to the effect that "neopagans" are responsible for the newest extension of the war to Belgium and Holland.

Italy now moves further and further in the direction of the Nazis, which means, at the same time, in the direction of Russia. The Pope, considering the whole world and considering the Italian Catholic people in particular, feels obliged to withdraw the last barriers of reticence and speak words which will add new fury to the forces which would rejoice at his destruction. But these words will strengthen millions to resist those same forces. We who stand far from these events, will pray that he be evermore confirmed by that prayer of Christ which gave steadfastness to Saint Peter.

CRITICS ARE NEEDED

WHEN a German calls a man: *Du Ketzer!* (You heretic!) and says he has *Ketzerei* (heresy), he has used as strong an expression against religious dissent as any language can well summon. The word is said to be derived from *Cathari*, famous heretics of the Middle Ages. Yet we can condemn heresy with equal vigor and still maintain that the presence of heretics may be salutary, even though heresy itself is an abomination.

The presence of dissenters can put believers on guard lest they abuse the sacred privileges of their faith. When saints are canonized, even the Devil has his advocate, to seek for flaws and thereby ensure a more perfect triumph of holiness.

We agree, therefore, fully with Dr. Stanley High who on May 15 told the 1,000 delegates at the Massachusetts Interchurch Convention that it would be far better for non-Catholics to "keep silent" if all they have to offer to the world is a resolution against the appointment of Myron C. Taylor to the Vatican. We deplore the attitude of these various suspicious and condemnatory bodies. We grieve over the injury that they do to themselves, for they will be the greatest sufferers from their own intolerance. We do not grieve unduly, however, over any harm they may do to us. Their effect is rather to make us watch our own steps carefully, to warn us not to place too much confidence in favors or prerogatives which are accorded to Catholics individually or in groups by persons high in authority. They will not and cannot make us relax in our unwearying contention for our rights but they will keep us ever reminded that rights are never obtained, never preserved, by facile methods but that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. For this salutary aid we can thank even those of whom in harsher moments we may use the term *Ketzer* and *Ketzerei*.

THE GREAT SUPPER

HOW often do we receive Our Lord in Holy Communion? Both the Gospel for tomorrow (Saint Luke, xiv, 16-24) and the fact that we are now in the Octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi, make the question a subject for profitable reflection. For the importance to our spiritual life of a frequent and devout reception of Holy Communion can hardly be overestimated.

Nearly thirty-five years ago (December 20, 1905) Pius X, of holy memory, issued a Decree through the Sacred Congregation of the Council which dealt a death-blow to a spirit that had worked much harm to souls. The Pontiff gave effect to the ardent desire of Christ and the Church by opening the door of the tabernacle, and inviting all Christians to receive Holy Communion frequently, and if possible, every day. On September 15, in the following year, the Sacred Congregation declared that the practice of frequent and daily Holy Communion "is recommended even to young children."

The surprise which some pious persons felt at these declarations, showed how far what the Congregation styled "the plague" and "the poison of Jansenism" had extended. At that time, "a frequent communicant" was one who received Holy Communion every week, and many were inclined to think Holy Communion once a month "frequent Communion." Others, misinterpreting the law of the Church, were quite content to receive Holy Communion once a year, during the Easter time. As for the children, it was common to bar them from the Holy Table until they were twelve or fourteen years of age.

We live in happier times. Most of us in the cities can, if we wish, receive Our Divine Saviour in His banquet of love every morning. Do we recognize the privilege that is ours? To paraphrase the author of *The Following of Christ*, if there were only one place in all the world where we could actually take into our hearts the very Body of Christ, would we not be more eager to go there, than we now are to go to the nearby parish church?

Few people, probably, stay away from Holy Communion because they are determined to keep on in mortal sin. We are not vicious; we are simply dull and lazy. If we understood the greatness of this Heavenly Gift, we would be anxious to receive Holy Communion as often as humanly possible. We complain that the service of God is too hard, that our temptations are overwhelming. Of course, God's service means a cross, but how can we expect our souls to be strong and vigorous when we deprive ourselves of this Heavenly Food?

Even the most careless among us hope to go out of this world strengthened by the Viaticum of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We best prepare for that dread moment by frequently and devoutly receiving Him Who is the promise of our salvation. Those who have often welcomed Jesus into their hearts, will find Him not a rigorous Judge but a loving Saviour.

CORRESPONDENCE

DANES

EDITOR: We wish to commend you for the fairness and the sympathetic insight evidenced in your editorial of April 27 dealing with the invasion of Denmark. The friendship and the generous spirit of the American people toward the Danish democracy have been revealed in countless editorial comments, of which yours was one of the first.

It is particularly interesting to American friends of Denmark that American newspapers have shown such ready understanding of the problems raised by events in that country. The Danes are among the most literate of all peoples, and their democratic institutions have been developed with the aid of a strong and free press, similar in many important respects to that of the United States. As you are of course aware, Denmark until recent weeks was a principal source of independent and uncensored news dispatches covering the news of the war. Not the least serious of the consequences of the invasion has been the cutting off of that flow of responsible news reports untainted by propaganda.

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that other Danish institutions and principles are equally jeopardized. There are those pessimistic enough to imagine that the high civilization achieved by the Danes may or will be finally destroyed, whatever the outcome of the present struggle. It is probably true that many features of Danish life will be profoundly and permanently altered; but we prefer to believe that the essential qualities of the Danes can be helped to survive even such a trial as they are now undergoing.

Those who know the Danes well are confident that their traditional fortitude will serve them in the physical ordeal of invasion; it is probable that in Denmark today there is a graver concern for the protection and preservation of those principles of individual freedom and responsible self-government which were so quickly suspended.

New York, N. Y.

TERRY SMITH
Sec. American Friends of
Danish Freedom and Democracy

DEFINITION: ISOLATION

EDITOR: Your indictment of President Roosevelt and Cordell Hull for their conduct of foreign affairs hardly does you credit.

Soviet Russia was recognized at a time when we were in the depths of a great depression and it was thought our trade would be helped. None other than the Hon. Alfred E. Smith was foremost in the advocacy of it, both on the radio and in interviews and private conversation. Doubtless a mistake was made, but would you in the present state of inter-

national affairs advocate the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Russia?

And as to the appointment of Mr. Cromwell and Mr. Josephus Daniels you are equally unfair. Certainly they measure up to the average of diplomatic appointments over the past fifty years.

And would you advocate, in the present state of unrest, a strong stand in Mexico? Certainly so far as Catholics are concerned, there is far more reason to intervene in Europe. No one disputes the seizure of the Mexican oil fields was unfriendly, but nothing can be done about it save to retaliate against Mexican interests here in the United States.

Should our State Department go after Mexico and the foreign powers now engaged in war in a strong protest over the invasion of our rights, the President's political opponents would immediately accuse him of war mongering and say he was leading us into the war.

The fact is, isolationism and the rigid enforcement of our international rights are entirely inconsistent. International law has gone by the board and the only practical way to register an effective protest is to make it clear to all that we are ready to fight for our rights if necessary.

East Orange, N. J.

C. E. B.

OUR MOTHER

EDITOR: Thanks for your beautiful little editorial (April 27) on "Our Mother," Mary: "that sweetest of all the flowers that have ever bloomed"—and that kept home life peaceful and idealistic while by loving care it was kept ever in bloom in every family in what was then Christian Europe.

By a strange coincidence, just after reading the little editorial I had occasion to open an old book, which I had not opened before for many years, and in turning over its pages in search of something else, I discovered a clipping, yellow with age, in which I read the following:

John Ruskin, in a celebrated passage in the *Fors Clavigera*, writes as follows: "After a careful examination, neither as adversary nor as friend of the influence of Catholicism, I am persuaded that reverence for the Madonna has been one of its noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of holiness of life and purity of character. There has, probably, not been an innocent home throughout Europe during the period of Christianity in which the imagined presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the duties, and comfort to the trials of men and women. Every brightest and loftiest achievement of the art and strength of manhood and womanhood has been the fulfilment of the prophecy made to the humble Lily of Israel—He that is mighty hath magnified me."

It seems to me that Lecky, though I cannot now recall where, has expressed these very same ideas—and Lecky could hardly have said that he was

"neither adversary nor friend of Catholicism." The most insane and incomprehensible feature in the religious revolt of the sixteenth century was its repudiation of the Mother of Jesus Christ—and, accordingly, the Mother of every Christian. Note that in Ruskin's opinion "the period of Christianity" had ceased.

Elmira, N. Y.

OWEN B. MCGUIRE

NEUTRALITY

EDITOR: I would like to comment on the Comment of April 27 in which you warned the American people against the danger that the Nazi and Communist propaganda offices give them.

I consider this excellent and timely advice, but I seriously doubt that the Nazi propaganda offers much competition to the British propaganda. To me it seems that the British propaganda has beat the Nazis' to the draw in the United States. In fact the pro-English feeling is so great in the United States at the present time that it has even been difficult for our Government representatives to control their feelings.

This pro-British feeling dates back as far as the famous Chicago speech of President Roosevelt in the Summer of 1938. In that same year Secretary Ickes stated publicly in London that in the event of war in which England would be involved the United States would come to her support. Only a short time ago Premier Reynaud of France made a radio speech in which he thanked Sumner Welles for the memorandum he brought to France and which the French Government had accepted. In regard to popular opinion, the Gallup poll recently showed that of all those interviewed, eighty per cent stated they preferred England to win over Germany.

All these examples and more seem to betray our policy of neutrality and lead us to the portals of war. United States, beware!

Los Angeles, Calif.

JUSTIN A. KRAMER

TRE ORE

EDITOR: The correspondence in AMERICA concerning the three-hour Good Friday closing has amused me. It so affected me because you Americans ask so little of the public on such a day. In Canada it is almost sacrilegious for anyone to think of working on Good Friday.

There are those who must occupy themselves with customary duties on the holiest of solemn days, but they are few. Even in the largest cities the day is quieter than any Sunday. In this city, not among the larger ones, the day is assuredly observed as the most solemn and quiet of the entire year.

It must be admitted, of course, that the day is not universally observed as a great religious occasion. I believe it may be said of Canada in general that Catholics mark the day with proper devotion and attention to churchly duties. In many places not only is the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified chanted in the morning, but special devotions mark the Tre Ore, and evening services commemorate the

death of Christ. Many Protestant churches, in this part of Canada at least, and I presume in others, also have special afternoon services.

It is rather late to be writing of such a matter, but there is always another Good Friday as there is always another Easter. The American attitude in wanting three hours is understandable when you now have nothing. (This amazed me when first I learned of it.) But why not strike out for the real thing?

Moncton, N. B., Can.

J. E. BELLIVEAU

EDITOR: The church of Saint Monica has had the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified at twelve noon for the past four years. Each member of the congregation follows the Mass and the explanations from a specially prepared leaflet.

Many places of business are closed, even movie houses, from twelve to three, and this has been a custom in San Francisco for years. Our entire choir is able to attend the ceremonies on Good Friday. The Cathedral Church had the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified at twelve noon this Good Friday. Many other churches throughout the Archdiocese have adopted this custom.

Each third Sunday of the month in this parish, the entire congregation sings the Proper and Common of the Mass. On the fourth Sunday the parish choir of 200 members is augmented by the Sodality of the Children of Mary and all sing the Mass, even the *Asperges* or the *Vidi Aquam*. Mass is sung at nine-thirty o'clock.

Pentecost Sunday Compline was sung by the choir and by the men of the Catholic Action group.

San Francisco, Calif.

(REV.) EDGAR BOYLE

Archdiocesan Director of Music

APPEASEMENT

EDITOR: I am really sorry that my article caused A Nun, Address Withheld, to gnash her teeth or otherwise express her indignation in an unbecoming manner, but I must accuse her of reading into my remarks something not there. Nowhere did I imply that nuns have need of a less virile religion than do the most masculine of men. I am sure, as your correspondent points out, that nuns often wage a more strenuous battle than do policemen on the most perilous beats, but I still submit that there is a form of expression which, by reason of its peculiar emotional quality, comes more easily (if it must come at all) from gentle and retired ladies in religion than it does from a phalanx of policemen.

I am surprised that my critic, who is so resolute and determined in her defense of the dignity of religion among our Sisters, would not agree with me that it is to be deplored that devotions fall short of that high liturgical standard which would seem to be in harmony with her own valiant nature.

In any case, I hope that she is not so disturbed as she pretends, for so spirited and forthright an opponent commands my hearty regard and admiration.

Norwood, Mass.

ANTHONY DUNN

LITERATURE AND ARTS

READING MAKETH A READY MAN

RAYMOND A. GRADY

I. BOOK OF THE MINUTE

YESTERDAY I received a letter, enclosing a self-addressed return postal card which, if I returned promptly, would entitle me to receive continuously the current Book of the Minute. A non-partisan organization of altruistic gentlemen in New York, fearful lest I be not in step with the march of literary progress, had selected my name from those of countless thousands of less fortunate persons, and if I would merely return the card, the books would start flowing to me immediately.

No, you are wrong. I would not have to keep the books. If I did not like them, I could just ship them back. Only if I decided to keep a book did I have to remit.

You say you do not see the catch in all this? That it appears eminently reasonable? That is all you know. You do not see anything, except the forced card: "Don't pay unless you keep the book."

The real stinger is that the Book of the Minute is well named. A minute after it is published it is forgotten, and nobody ever hears of it again. The gentlemen in New York are playing on a well known human failing. For a man will eventually give money to a continued appeal, even if he knows it is sinful, wasteful folly. He begins to feel, after a while, that he is not being a good sport. And in this case, he would return books for five or six times; but after that he would buy one lest the altruistic gentlemen feel he had let them down.

Almost certainly, when he reached the buying point, the book he would retain would be *Love Life of the Lamellicorn Beetle*. And he would get into involved, peace-shattering arguments with his wife about it, too. She would point out, reasonably enough, that she could have had a new hat or something for the money he deliberately squandered on that old book. And he would not be able to say a word, because he would recognize the justice of her plaint. Possibly, he would have to refute a charge of wilfully depriving his poor children of bread. A deprivation which any child of my acquaintance would view with complaisance provided he be not deprived of the movies.

Now there is not a good new book published every minute; or every month. There are, possibly, three books published each year that are ex-

cellent light reading. There are not more than six books published in any century that mankind should read, re-read and possess. From the deposit of literature accumulating since the dawn of time, Doc Eliot could only cull out five feet of books that are necessary to the full life. He left out the Bible, and he did include some unquestionable bushwaw. If the old Doc could not find more books than that, where does this group of altruists get off? Were they ever Presidents of Harvard?

You may object that I refer only to light reading matter. And you could be right, at that. At least I never read "scientific" expositions of thought. They are always contradicted later. Mr. Einstein denied his theory even before the rest of us knew what it was.

He has, lately, expounded a new theory, the real McCoy this time. It will be at least five years before anyone understands this one, and Einstein can be depended upon to have another theory ready to explode by that time. I will do Einstein, and Darwin, justice by admitting that each of them offered only a "theory." It was for other, more learned, professors in the fresh-water Universities to teach the theories as fact. Anyway, the most unscientific thing in the world today is the modern scientist.

I do not know how I got off on that track. I was speaking about the "Book of the Minute." And I am willing to speak about it, but I'll be hanged if I'll read it. And I advise you to follow my lead. I can safely so advise, because I do not believe this essay will be included in the list. If it should be, send it back.

II. CRITICISM

WHEN I was wrestling with the study of English, years ago, I was told that criticism could be either favorable or unfavorable. And this came as a distinct shock to me, because all the criticism I had experienced was distinctly unfavorable. My appearance, personal habits, lack of initiative and general cussedness, above all, had all been the objects of criticism.

The same distinct shock would be felt today by a youngster suddenly informed that criticism could be unfavorable as well as favorable. Because there

is no evidence of unfavorable criticism shown to his eyes searching the newspapers, magazines and books for news of the latest doings in Hollywood. Everything which emanates from the film capital is "colossal" or "stupendous," and it will be "terremotive" when that word is discovered. Elsewhere criticism may have retained its caustic tendencies, but the youth of today would not know, because they do not read elsewhere.

It would seem from reading the descriptions that every person on the screen or on the air is the very best. There is no poor play; no terrible radio act.

Now that is silly on the face of it. There are mediocrities. Hundreds of them. And they are continued partially because the public is being educated by press agents to believe that the public's taste, if not in accord with the unpaid advertising of film-land, must be wrong. Partially, too, the mediocrities are continued because the public is not particularly interested in their grossness, cheap wit or poor voices, but is deeply interested in sending in the two front labels to get a silver spoon, or a European war map, or a free trip to Hollywood.

I should like to see someone launch a crusade—or is it probes one launches?—along the lines of "truth in advertising." If a thing is good, let the reviewer take off his coat, polish up his adjective and let fly with both barrels. If it is not good, let him say so in words of one syllable. And let the reviewers be selected after a Civil Service Examination based upon their past performances. At the end of each year, issue batting averages for each reviewer, and any one of them that does not bat over 750 should be fined a thousand dollars, put in jail and have his adjective taken away.

Such a crusade could not fail to be a good thing for the really good pictures, radio plays, actors and actresses. It would lessen production by about seventy-five per cent, but it would increase quality. And my Washington correspondent says those things are looked on with favor just now.

It would also be a good thing for some of the alleged stars who nauseate us now. It might even put them back into productive jobs which their talents fit them to perform. Such as post-hole digging for actors, and sock knitting for actresses.

III. ANGLES ON THE SAXONS

IT is a very bad thing to be cursed with an unquestioning mind. A person's understanding may be permanently warped because in his formative years he was disposed to believe implicitly anything an older, wiser person told him.

The child who goes into anything with a decided doubt as to the knowledge, ability and truthfulness of an instructor is a child who will get on in the world. He will not get on in school very well, because doubt there is heresy and is met by swift punishment. But if he persists in his stubborn unbelief he will, eventually, acquire some real knowledge.

I can remember a day in grammar school when

a visiting dignitary lectured us in adult words, learnedly, that the best English was the English based upon the Anglo-Saxon. That the rolling, polysyllabic words based on the Roman and Greek languages were something a really good English scholar would not be caught dead with. I drank that in, believed him. A neighbor in the room told me afterward that the guy was full of the 1886 equivalent of horsefeathers. That every other word he used, himself, was actually a classical three-decker, with fanfares.

But that neighbor was right. He did not go the whole road in his criticism, but young as he was, he knew that the man was wrong. And he knew it instinctively, where it has taken me many long years to arrive at the same conclusion to my own satisfaction.

For I was later to find that the Anglo-Saxon: (a) never existed; (b) was pretty much no-account, anyway; and (c) in his whole language had only thirty-eight words, thirty-seven of which he had picked up from Caesar's legions.

The Anglo-Saxon, if he did exist, lived a very uninteresting life, subsisting on acorns, hogs and such dumb game as his arrow could bring down at a distance of fourteen feet. His attire was the skin of a defunct beast; his idea of art was to paint himself blue, using woad for the purpose, and cavort in supposedly terrifying poses behind trees, in the hope of frightening away enemies. If the enemy refused to frighten, the Anglo-Saxon went away from there toward Hants, very much confused.

And that is the race that is supposed to have laid the foundation of the English language! They had a very low form of civilization, if any, and yet they knew how to talk better than the Romans, whose civilization was fully as complex as our own, and in a good many ways more so! They knew nothing whatever of art, engineering, science or logic. And yet we should base our understanding on theirs! To say the least, it does sound nonsensical, doesn't it?

But there are teachers of English today who insist that the Anglo-Saxon words form the basis of our speech. It could not be a very broad base, nor a very deep one, considering their paucity of words. And when we want to name something new, that some scientist has just turned out, do those teachers start us digging into the Anglo-Saxon, or do they send us to Latin and Greek? They send us where we can find something that will describe the process or the object invented.

Of course, deeply hidden in the teacher's subconscious, is the firm conviction that the Latins were a Mediterranean type—and the teacher will have to think of another word than Mediterranean to describe it, too—and that such non-Nordics could not possibly have done anything notable or worthy of emulation. The Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, were Nordics, pure Nordics, and that despite the hyphen.

Who wants to be descended from a blue-painted, skin-clothed, wordless Nordic barbarian, anyway? I'll take the Mediterraneans, thank you.

BOOKS

JOURNEY IN QUEST OF THE SYMBOLIZED

ROMAN FOUNTAIN. By Hugh Walpole. Doubleday, Doran and Co. \$2.50

IN February, 1939, Hugh Walpole, the English novelist, was assigned the task of "covering" for the Hearst press the funeral of the late Pope Pius XI, the election and coronation of his successor, the former Papal Secretary of State, Pius XII, (Pacelli). *Roman Fountain* is an account of the incidents connected with the task. It is far more an account of Mr. Walpole's reactions during this visit to Rome, and a flood of autobiographical memories and reflections enliven and point the story of external events.

For the journey was more than the filling of a journalist's duty. It was a quest—of something symbolized by a "Roman Fountain." As a youth, the author had seen the visible fountain once; at fifty-five, he cannot find it again, but he finds what the fountain stands for—the accent on the spiritual, the immortal, the Divine. The Rome of a Papal election, the thoughts, emotions and attitudes stimulated by Cardinal Pacelli's election, the electric current set up in thousands and communicated to and shared by the writer, result in a successful quest. Light is thrown upon birth, life, death, destiny and immortality, light which Walpole shares with his readers in pages which are heart-reaching and compellingly emotional:

"Pacelli! Pacelli! Pacelli!" I found that I myself was crying. I, who was no Catholic, who had seen Pacelli but once, to whom this must surely be an outside affair, was joyfully happy as though my dear friend had received his heart's desire. I felt it so personally that I had to speak to the young priest: "I am so glad. That makes me so happy. Now things will be better. . . ." And he, knowing no English at all, smiled and laughed and looked at me as though he loved me.

Walpole's feelings at the moment when Pius XII gave his blessing are thus described:

So it was now. For half an hour three hundred thousand of us stood, hand in hand as it were, joyful and happy, believing in God, believing in Peace, and trusting one another. . . . The thin white figure appeared on the balcony. All we, his children, received his blessing.

Roman Fountain is eminently to be commended both for style and content. The reviewer regrets only one feature. In the earlier part of the book an affectation and flippancy mar some of the chapters.

WILLIAM J. MCGARRY

INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL FROM DESCRIPTIVE ASPECT

THE WAGNER ACT. By John H. Mariano, Ph.D. Hastings House, New York. \$2.50

THE title of this book is provocative, but its tone is irenic. Dr. Mariano, formerly a university instructor in social science, is a member of the New York Bar, chiefly engaged as a counselor in labor relations. In elucidating the stated purpose of the Wagner Act, the author is at his best, but in meeting criticisms of the Act, and particularly attacks on the manner in which the Labor

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Board has administered it, he is, unfortunately, at his weakest.

Much criticism, no doubt, has been captious, unfounded, and plotted for political effect, but not all. Dr. Mariano admits frankly that the Act is "one-sided" and "deliberately partial to labor." Possibly a better way of expressing Dr. Mariano's meaning would be to write that the Act grew out of a desire to use the power of the Federal Government to raise the wage-earner to a plane of bargaining-equality with the employer. That, surely, was a laudable purpose; on the other hand, a purpose without means suited to attain the end sought, is about as useful—apart from its advertisement value—as a chimera buzzing about in a vacuum in an effort to sustain its well-being on second intentions.

From the Catholic viewpoint, the Government does not undertake a work of supererogation when it plans to use its powers to ameliorate the condition of the wage-earner. It merely addresses itself to a strict duty, to be fulfilled by means which are in keeping with the end, and effective.

As to the National Labor Relations Board, it seems to me that Dr. Mariano underestimates the difficulties which a Board of this character must meet, inasmuch as it is constituted, and must be constituted, of political appointees. If the entity which Walter Lippmann styles "the providential state" were richly endowed with the wisdom, justice and prudence, attributed in an eminent degree exclusively to Divine Providence, the Wagner Act need never have been passed, for the evils against which it is directed would not exist, or, at least, not in the degree calling for the intervention of the Federal Government. But we cannot afford to forget, especially in this period in which charges and duties drawn from every field of human activity are placed at the door of Congress, or are willingly assumed, if not usurped, by the administrative branch of the Government, that the state is often forced to work through men in whom wisdom, justice and prudence are conspicuously absent.

It does not follow that our industrial and economic evils will begin to taper to extinction as soon as a power that is national in its scope announces their destruction. Legislation is no wiser than the men who devised it, and the most beneficent aims of legislation may be wrested for tyrannical purposes by the men who administer it. As I have observed on other occasions, legislation must have something more than a good intention to make it effective.

Dr. Mariano does not discuss the philosophic background of labor legislation, and terms which call for careful limitation, "capitalism," for instance, are often left undefined. But those who wish primarily a descriptive treatment of the Wagner Act will find his book informative and useful.

PAUL L. BLAKELY

REMINDER IN

BLOOD AND WOUNDS

MYSTICAL PHENOMENA IN THE LIFE OF THERESA NEUMANN. By the Most Rev. Josef Teodorowicz. B. Herder Book Co. \$4

ON behalf of Theresa Neumann, the stigmatic of Konnersreuth, the most favorable argument appears to me that God *actually* produces through her the effect which we should naturally presume He *intends* to produce by such a person: a vivid reminder of Christ's Passion and the spiritual strengthening of those who witness this reminder.

The Passion of Our Saviour exists—objectively—not in historic time, for which it is a past, though real event, but in the indivisible "now" of eternity. For God's economy of souls it does not suffice that Christ's followers give a purely doctrinal assent, through Divine Faith, to this objective reality of the Passion. Something more

Is required: an emotional, imaginative realization of the Passion, and that by the multitudes. Without such a realization our Faith becomes sterile, our Catholicism grows decadent.

No art, no Crucifix, no book, no sermon, can so shock a soul into realizing what Christ suffered and how He suffered as does the sight of Theresa Neumann's blood and wounds; the periodically repeated narrative of her weekly vision. If we accept the accounts as given by Archbishop Teodorowicz and other visitors to Konnersreuth, it is God's "publicity" for His Son's Passion, most skillfully planned and ordered. Always there are exactly thirty-three separate visions, beginning and ending precisely on time; always the same mysterious loss of memory during the visions followed by perfect remembrance during the succeeding period of "exalted rest"; always the same terrific sequence of agony just skirting death, relieved by complete restoration through peaceful union and Holy Communion. And all is accomplished amid unbroken fast.

Evidence seems overwhelming that the sight of Theresa and conversation with her, in each of her perfectly distinct stages, produces an ennobling effect upon the soul of the onlooker. Though the stigmatic of Konnersreuth is as typically German as the Saint of Lisleux was typically French, this Polish Archbishop of Lemberg (Lwów) renders the same testimony as did the French woman journalist, Madame Dannemarie. "How can it be explained," asks the Archbishop, "that precisely what makes us shudder, what ordinarily shatters our nervous system, should become such a drawing magnet of the soul?"

The enthusiasm that the Archbishop feels for Theresa does not keep him from making a very thorough analysis of most aspects of her case: moral, dogmatic, pastoral, spiritual, psychological and scientific. For the strictly medical, one would need to go back to Gerlich. Some of the most instructive passages in the book show how certain psychological disturbances, when they exist, are reconcilable with a person's domination by wholly spiritual and morally exalted forces.

The treatise might be more effective if points had been taken into consideration raised by the late Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., in his studies on Konnersreuth and various ecstasies and stigmatics. Enough, however, has been done to make the work one of the most enlightening contributions to the already extensive Konnersreuth literature. The author succeeds in producing conviction, and gives spiritual inspiration as well.

JOHN LAFARGE

BOOKS IN BRIEFER REVIEW

THIS IS OUR CHINA. By Madame Chiang Kai-Shek.
Harper and Bros. \$3

THERE is pride of possession and achievement in the very title of this book. Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the talented wife of the Generalissimo, has a deep faith in her country and in her fellow countrymen. Beyond the discouragements of the present, she sees the hope of a strong, unified China. She does not minimize either the time or the efforts this will require. But she insists, and with reasons based on a persuasive narration of the progress China had made up to the Japanese invasion, that there is already a new China, resolved to take its rightful place in the hierarchy of nations. Its development has been impeded by the war in a material way. But the soul of China has found new strength in suffering.

Madame Chiang Kai-Shek finds it hard to explain why the Democracies, and particularly the United States, have not come to the aid of China. She expresses sincere thanks to American friends who have helped in many ways. But she has to fight back thoughts of bit-

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terness in recording the incongruous fact that our Government, which had signed a solemn treaty to guarantee China's national integrity, sanctioned the sale to Japan of gasoline, oil and materials needed in the campaign against China. She pleads with us for a definite refusal, at least, to be a partner to Japanese destruction of life and property in China.

The author would readily admit the charge that the book is propaganda. She thinks of her part in the rebirth of China as that of a Crusader, particularly in the field of education and in the spread of Christianity. She has written a moving appeal in excellent English idiom. Unfortunately, several sections of the book are reprints from magazine articles published as far back as 1936. It would be more satisfactory if Madame Chiang Kai-Shek had brought her material up to date.

ROBERT A. HEWITT

THE LANTERN BURNS. By Jessica Powers. The Monastine Press. \$1.50

WITH this, her first book, hand-printed by Clifford Laube of the Monastine Press, totally unheralded save for the matchless notice given her on the blurb sheet by her publisher, Jessica Powers takes her place in the front rank of living Catholic poets. Her gifts are marvelous. Her imagery is rich, warm and surprising, and her touch so sure and delicate that any theme may be safely entrusted to her; nothing is kept commonplace once she has measured it with her skill. In addition, Miss Powers achieves that rare, almost vanished quality in modern verse, pathos. Not for many moons have I read a poem that moved me so deeply as *The Master Beggar*. And the overtones in certain of her poems like *The Terminal* are tremendous. I quote this last:

It was Fifth Avenue and it was April.

Who could have dreamed such wind and flying snow?

The Terminal gleamed gold far in the distance.

And then I thought: where truly do we go?

Is it not thus we wander out of time

Down the bright canyons of white whirling air,
Too cold and tired for beauty, and too sad
To utter secrets that are warm to share?

Some nights were meant for tears, and some for laughter;

And some to hold in trust, and some to spend;
But portents were astir that night we sighted
The terminal that stands at the world's end.

Now a train pulled out in that poem, and never returned. But I defy you to have heard it. For the poems of Jessica Powers are, like her name, a blend of Hebraic reticence and Celtic tenderness, or, to express it in better Christian terms, of deep humility joined to an aristocratic ideal.

LEONARD FEENEY

GENTLEMAN OF STRATFORD. By John Brophy. Harper and Bros. \$2.50

THE "Gentleman" of Stratford is, of course, William Shakespeare. The book has a broad, interesting thesis, one well worthy of a scholar's best effort. It is an attempt to portray in fictional form the four loves of Shakespeare's life, and to order in sequence his actions and his literary productions as affected by these loves. His first love is Anne Hathaway, and seduction precedes marriage. His second love is a chaste, unrequited love for the unidentified Lady in Scarlet and White, his dear Lady Disdain. A long enduring, all too vividly portrayed, sensuous, illicit passion is his third love. The fourth is his daughter Judith, who, however, seems to have been used merely as a mechanical device, a peg on which to hang the events of his last years.

The *Gentleman of Stratford* is John Brophy's Shakespeare, not mine; and, I hope, not the historical one. And I am sorry for that, too. For John Brophy made his Will Shakespeare handsome, talented, likeable and admirable; and then threw a lot of mud and filth at him. It must have surprised and pained the sensitive

Will; it disappointed, shocked and disgusted me. Why? Oh! Why will a capable, versatile, scholarly author perpetrate such a foul deed? Is this but another example of what is called "merchandizing" one's talent? The book is not healthy reading and most decidedly is not recommended.

ARTHUR J. SHEEHAN

FROM OFF ISLAND. By Dionis Coffin Riggs. Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co. \$2.75

THE author tells interestingly the story of her grandmother. Anybody not a native of Martha's Vineyard is "from off." So was Mary Carlin, Irish Catholic lass, sailing in her teens from her native Sidney to a sister in San Francisco in the early fifties. Her ship rests at Honolulu, where the captain of a Yankee whaler, James Cleaveland, woos and weds her. Grandmother's troublesome voyages on her husband's whaler, her more troublesome sojourns with in-laws during periods at Martha's Vineyard, make material of a thrilling story. Mary Carlin Cleaveland was, indeed, a romantic heroine, save in one respect; she seems to have let Yankee bigotry stamp her Irish Catholicism out of her.

J. CRAGMYR

BOOKS AND YOU. By Somerset Maugham. Doubleday, Doran and Co. \$1.25

THIS is not one of those books that the author felt "just had to be written." Indeed, for one third of his opusculum, that concerning American books, Mr. Maugham frankly admits that he had neither the inclination nor the competence; but the other two essays, anent English and continental literatures, had previously appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and later he was asked to publish them in more permanent form, adding a felicitous word on native talent. When one thus realizes the scope of the work, the difficulty of encompassing such an enormous field in little more than a hundred pages, is altogether understandable. Michelangelo, after all, could hardly be expected to spread a Sistine fresco on the back of a postage stamp.

The book's redeeming qualities are Mr. Maugham's cultivated and charming style that reveals a carefully developed capacity for the joys of reading, an enthusiasm for the best things in literature that begets enthusiasm, and in general that quality that he most insists upon in his masters, "readability." It may not be the book on books that we have been expecting from an author of Maugham's distinction, but it is a book that is wholly Maugham—what there is of it. It will do nobody any harm, which is more perhaps than can be said for some of Maugham's novels and plays; whether it will do anybody any good, depends upon the individual's scope of reading.

KEVIN SULLIVAN

THE SWAN OF USK. By Helen Ashton. The Macmillan Co. \$2.50

THIS is the life of Henry Vaughn, "the Swan." He was born in a small stone manor-house on a steep hillside above the river Usk, in Wales. "I would not exchange this river for all the land it runs over," he said. By this river he was buried 1695 years from Christ, seventy-three years from his birth. Miss Ashton, skilled and practiced writer, has fictionized the events of these seventy-three years. A thorough scholar, with a wide view of the background, she cleverly pieces into a narrative the historical details in the life of a meek man who was destined to be a poet, a soldier, husband, father, country doctor. The book would be most useful to students of the poet and his period.

The style is quiet and staid; it has dignity and its own good flavor. But to the average reader it would very probably prove dull; for the average reader would want more synthetic imagination, more outstanding dialog and more of the suspense that rises to a strong dramatic climax. Since the book is openly a novel, it might have gone the full way of one. Specifically, on page 217 there is betrayed a cynical attitude toward marriage; and generically the book is rather harsh on the "Papists."

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THEATRE

LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG. Mr. William Saroyan's invention flagged when he selected the title of his new play, which the Theatre Guild and Eddie Dowling are jointly presenting at the Plymouth Theatre, with Walter Huston as its star and Jessie Royce Landis as leading woman. He had been rather inventive, while he was writing the play and crowding the stage with thirty players, fourteen of whom are children. But there is not much love in the production, and what there is is not especially sweet.

In short, Mr. Saroyan has once more smashed accepted rules of playwriting, yet has given his admirers something they will like, though they will have difficulty in describing it. So has this writer, who at moments in the play admires Mr. Saroyan very much indeed, and at other moments finds herself—well, let us say a bit confused.

When the curtain rises we are shown the home of Anne Hamilton, 44, described on the program as "a beautiful, unmarried, small-town woman." She lives alone in a nice cottage in California, surrounded by a fine garden. A messenger boy brings her a telegram. It tells her that the stranger who stopped at her garden gate for a few minutes twenty years ago, has been in love with her ever since.

Anne does not remember the stranger. There is excellent reason why she should not, for the telegram is sent as a practical joke. But a stranger happens along at that moment, Barnaby Gaul in the play, but none other than Walter Huston, a quack medicine vender, traveling over the country with a satchel full of his remedies. He catches on to the joke, poses as the old-time lover, is warmly received by Anne, and is given the freedom of her house so fully that he immediately shaves there.

While he is attending to this detail, Newton and Leona Yearling arrive, with their fourteen children. They are all tramps. They stop to rest in the pretty garden. Disturbed by their presence, Anne's suitor departs, forgetting his medicine case. Anne, in love with him by this time, for they have been together at least twenty minutes, rushes after him.

The Yearling family, left alone, take possession of the house, dress up in Anne's clothes, eat all the food in Anne's pantry, and are finally turned out by the village constable. Before they leave one of the children sets fire to Anne's house while playing with matches, and it burns down. Anne returning, takes refuge in the home of the messenger boy, whose father is a Greek wrestler. The Yearlings take refuge there, too. So does the pedler, who has returned for his medicine case and has incidentally discovered that he loves Anne.

After that everybody is happy. The pedler and Anne have decided to adopt one of the Yearling infants, and apparently the Yearlings and all the rest of their brood as well. For Anne and her spouse are to tour the country selling their medicine, and the Yearlings are to go along.

Before all this is decided we see the wrestler's home in which he ties Mr. Huston around his neck once or twice after sympathetically plying Anne with enough Italian wine to make her forget her troubles and go through a scene of intoxication, which she does very well.

In fact, all the acting is good. Miss Landis is especially happy in her rôle. So are the Yearling parents, played to perfection by Arthur Hunnicutt and Doro Merande. So is Alan Reed, as the wrestler, and John Economides, his father, and (it is high time this boy got a tribute) Georgie Amerikanos, the wrestler's son, a lad of thirteen or so whose real name is Peter Fernandez.

ELIZABETH JORDAN

FILMS

EDISON THE MAN. The adage that the child is father to the man is brought out strikingly in the film life of Thomas Alva Edison which, auspiciously begun by Mickey Rooney, is brought to a brilliant close by Spencer Tracy in a story as brimful of humanity as it is of scientific achievement. This is a splendid companion piece to *Young Tom Edison* and the producers must be credited with a unique accomplishment in bisecting a life and bringing out two biographies on the same figure, each remarkable in its own right. For they are distinctive even though one is an extension of the other. The first film was one of promise and this is one of fulfillment and maturity. Under Clarence Brown's understanding touch, the ambitions of Edison, focused on the electric light, are naturally interwoven with his family interests, and we watch his difficult progress from young manhood to the triumphal jubilee celebration of his greatest invention with no detached scientific curiosity but with personal enthusiasm. The authentic incidents have been welded into a dramatic and swiftly moving story surpassing most fiction. As Edison, Spencer Tracy appears to be the best naturalistic actor on the screen and has completely realized his subject. Gene Lockhart, representing the menace of the gas interests, Rita Johnson and Charles Coburn are excellent in support. Both as universal entertainment and as inspirational biography, this film will rank high on the season's lists. (MGM)

I WAS AN ADVENTURESS. Patrons of the musical arts may be somewhat disconcerted to find Tchaikowsky interpolated into a regulation crime story but, surviving that, they will go on to enjoy this moderately exciting film. Gregory Ratoff has insinuated the art touch into a rapid tale of jewel thieves who use a ballerina to facilitate their work only to have her fall in love with a young victim and retire. After her marriage, the dancer is threatened with blackmail by her former boss, but a wise confession solves the problem nicely. It is not surprising that the Swan Ballet as interpreted by Vera Zorina is the somewhat incongruous highlight of the production, but the plot will hold interest on its own account, especially since Erich von Stroheim portrays the cunning villain with all his sinister élan. Sig Ruman and Fritz Feld help to make this agreeable fare for adults. (Twentieth Century-Fox)

MY FAVORITE WIFE. Instead of the customary long-lost husband who turns up in time to complicate marital matters, this desperately gay film introduces an Enoch Arden wife to vary the threadbare devices of risqué farce. On his second honeymoon, the hero encounters his first wife who survived reports of her drowning on a desert island. The usual troubles set in and, as with another such comedy of recent vintage, the triangle is solved in a bewildering court session. Garson Kanin's direction is bright enough to give the whole affair a veneer of laughter, but both situations and dialog mistake suggestiveness for subtlety. Cary Grant, Irene Dunne, Gail Patrick and Randolph Scott are deft enough in the lightweight cause of a film whose sparkle is dimmed by frequent objectionable lines. (RKO)

THE SAINT TAKES OVER. The cinema stock of this detection series takes a sharp rise with the present adventure, being a lively and adult melodrama with a good distribution of suspense and humor. The Saint's task is to clear a policeman friend of his of suspicion in several murders, which he does with characteristic dispatch. Jack Hively sustains a whirlwind pace and George Sanders, with Wendy Barrie and Jonathan Hale, to add complications, again demonstrates suave ingenuity. (RKO)

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

EVENTS

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WANTED copy of THE CATHOLIC MIND for 1939 Nos. 866 and 876 of Volume 37; 1921 No. 12 of Volume 19; 1920 No. 2 of Volume 18; 1917 No. 13 of Volume 15; 1914 No. 12 of Volume 12; 1909 No. 6 of Volume 7; 1907 No. 13 of Volume 5. The America Press, 53 Park Place, New York, N. Y.

THE simultaneous occurrence over a far-flung territory of unusual things gave rise to the fear that the usual was being quietly displaced by the unusual, that the usual will become unusual, the unusual usual. . . . While Shirley Temple was retiring as superannuated at the age of eleven, a Parland, Calif. woman was getting a facial at the age of one hundred. . . . When an auto hit a train in Nebraska, the train was wrecked, two brakemen slightly injured. The railroad company collected damages from the autoist. . . . After a Massachusetts woman had securely locked her barn, thieves stole the whole barn, part of her five-room cottage. . . . A ninety-eight-year-old Eastern woman commenced taking flying lessons. . . . In Minneapolis, an early morning fire caused the door bell to ring, thus awakened and saved the family. . . . An eighty-year-old French doctor advised clients desirous of longevity to drink no water, take no exercise. . . . A Maine professor about to begin an 8,000-mile bus tour of the United States was given a 15-foot long bus ticket. It was feared he might need a small bus just for the ticket. . . . A Butler, Pa., woman has a lemon tree in her dining room, makes home-grown, home-made lemon pies. . . . In Monticello, N. Y., a remarkably healthy man of 103 ascribes his robust condition to the fact that he frequently drinks a cup of kerosene. "I've drunk gallons of it," he revealed. . . . The old custom of putting money in weighing machines appeared to be fading out. When the coin box of a penny weight machine in Lackawanna, N. Y., was opened, the owner found hundreds of washers and slugs, no pennies. . . . In Kohler, Wis., a fire caused \$3,000 damage to the fire house. . . . A Pittsburgh man worked 40 years in a library, never read a book. . . .

Weather reports appeared to be growing more thorough. Meteorologists announced there was a dust storm in southern Oregon 5,000 years ago. . . . A friendlier feeling toward animals was observed. The proposed experimental bombing of seventy goats, in order to ascertain how effective a new "super-explosive," was aroused substantial protest. . . . That the same inquiry may produce different results in varying circumstances was clearly seen. Throughout the nation many citizens inquired of other citizens: "What time is it?" without causing extraordinary reactions. In New Hampshire, however, a milkman, when asked this same question, instead of answering, became pale, leaped from his wagon, ran faster than he thought he could to the nearest police station. The milkman on his early morning rounds passed through a cemetery. A figure rose from an open grave, queried: "What time is it?" Police later discovered the figure belonged to an intoxicated man. . . . Repercussions from the first World War were still active. In Madison, Wis., a World War aviator, sleeping in his bed room, dreamed his airplane was being attacked by the enemy, that he had better "bail out." Upon awakening from his dream, he found himself lying on a flower garden in his back yard. . . . New memory helps were developed. To check on her husband's mailing of his letters, a Missouri woman inserts a return postal card in each epistle. . . .

Dips from Life. . . . Cuban authorities refusing to permit seven escaped convicts from the French Guiana prison to land, setting the convicts adrift in a small boat, provided with food and drinking water. . . . Kentuckians instituting court action for the right to use snakes in their religious services. . . . Natives destroying 2,500 trees in the streets of a South African town because the trees were "inhabited by spirits." . . . A relative of Abraham Lincoln pleading to be put back on relief. . . . The Russian paper, *Pravda*, deploring the fact that some school children still seemed to believe in God.

THE PARADER